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A-League Final Round Friday 30th Mar - Sunday 1st Apr 2012

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ONE DOWN, ONE TO GO FOR MARINERS...

PHOTO: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

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Langy seven join Skelly at Strikers

By Craig MacKenzie

JAMIE Skelly still is welcome at his old soccer club, Langwarrin, but only just.

It tends to be like that when seven players from the previous season walk out and join you at your new club.

"I haven't approached any player from Langy to come to us. They all approached me," said the head coach of Peninsula Strikers.

The Skelly name has been synonymous with Langwarrin for two generations so eyebrows were raised when Jamie Skelly stood down from his assistant coaching role there to take on the Strikers' job last September.

And he wasted little time in effecting change at the State League Three South East outfit.

He appointed his cousin Brian Skelly as his assistant then proceeded to cut a swathe through the first team squad retaining just four players from last season, among them club captain Michael Cooke.

The seven lured from Langwarrin are Sean Skelly (Jamie's brother), Alex Van Heerwarden, Miron Andronicus, Dogan Dagli, Brendan O'Connell, Mark Szczesnowicz and Mitch Blake.

But Skelly's marquee signing has been English import Josh Thompson, a 21-year-old striker who has been on the books of Crewe Alexandra.

"Unfortunately Josh injured his hamstring in the Casey Cup Final (two weeks ago) and he'll probably miss Saturday's home game against Berwick City," said the coach.

"As will last year's best and fairest Alex Calder who won't return from the US until next week."

But there's another ace up Skelly's sleeve in quicksilver winger Marcus Roberts who has joined from Keysborough along with his brother Gladwyn.

Marcus Roberts had an outstanding season in 2011 and is widely regarded as the best left winger in the local area.

Saturday's clash is the 2012 league season opener and both Strikers and Berwick have had impressive pre-seasons, the latter under the guidance and experience of coach Carlos Rettre.

Both clubs have defeated higher ranked opponents in the Statewide Cup while Strikers also clinched the Casey Cup with a 5-2 win over Springvale City.

But despite his squad's recent success Skelly is playing down any talk of winning titles.

"That has never been mentioned during my discussions with the football department," he said.

"We have a very young squad and my brief is to improve on last year (9th) while continuing to bring players through the ranks from our juniors."

Skelly points to 17-year-old central midfielder Kristian Miller as an endorsement of the club's development policy.

"Kristian is a young guy that's come through our junior set-up and we expect big things from him.

"My aim was to bring in the very best young players we could find on the peninsula and the average age of the squad will be between 21 and 22 years.

"We'd like to be in State Two within two or three years so although I'm on a one-year agreement I see this as a long-term job."

That last comment will come as a blow to the rumour mongers who believe Skelly is merely biding his time until his long-serving Langwarrin counterpart, Gus Macleod, is pensioned off.

Peninsula Strikers head coach Jamie Skelly. Photo: Darryl Kennedy.

While Skelly spent most of his playing career with Langwarrin he also played with Mornington and Chelsea and in 2007 was part of the Strikers side that clinched the State Three championship.

In 2008 he was appointed reserves coach at Langwarrin and crowned his three seasons in that role by leading his team to the 2010 league title.

He joined the senior coaching group last season but 2011 ended in disappointment as Langwarrin lost a play-off game against Whittlesea Ranges and was relegated to State League Two.

Skelly is planning a long-term coaching career. He holds a senior coaching badge and hopes to eventually gain an AFC (Asian Football Confederation) badge.

Peninsula Strikers' full senior squad is: Sean Skelly, Shane Sinclair, Sait Uygur, Lewis Potter, Miron Andronicus, Alex Van Heerwarden, Dogan Dagli, Gladwyn Roberts, Marcus Roberts, Kristian Miller, Mark Szczesnowicz, Jesse Murray, Mitch Blake, Michael Cooke, Nick Thomas, Josh Thompson, Ben Merrick, Brendan O'Connell, David Schout, Alex Calder.

Saturday's games featuring clubs under the City of Frankston banner are: Peninsula Strikers v Berwick City (Centenary Park, 3pm); Casey Comets v Langwarrin (Comets Stadium, 3pm); Seaford United v Boroondara Eagles (North Seaford Reserve, 3pm); Keysborough v Skye United (Coomoora Reserve, 3pm); Baxter Eagles v Glen Waverley (Baxter Park, 3pm); Frankston Pines v Old Melburnians (Monterey Reserve, 7pm).

Golden Plains girls mixing with the stars

The girls from Golden Plains Soccer Club got a chance to mix with the stars when they took part in the Total Girl Soccer Tournament in Ballarat at the weekend.

This was the first tournament for the new club as they joined teams from all over Victoria to celebrate Women's Football Week launched by Federal Sports Minister Kate Lundy.

Former Matildas keeper Melissa Barbieri and current player Eloise Kellond-Knight were there to watch and support the youngsters, with Barbieri telling the girls the sky was the limit when they pursued their dreams.

Over a thousand girls, parents, families and friends joined in what was being billed as the largest all-girls tournament in Australia.

The girls played seven-a-side matches for age groups from under-10 to under-16 and this was the first time Golden Plains girls had a chance to take part since the formation of the new club this year.

The club is entering teams in the local Geelong Regional Football Association competitions this season and is recruiting new players— girls at all ages from under-7s to under-15s, boys at under-12 and under-13.

Training sessions are held at Bannockburn Primary School on Thursdays from 3.45 to 4.45 pm.

Contact details: Anthony Vanjek (President) 03-5281-1818 or 0419-811858 or by email at afvanjek@bigpond.com

President Anthony Vanjek with the girls of Golden Plains Soccer Club at the Total Girl Soccer Tournament in Ballarat. Photo: Rachel Maywood.

Qantas Joeys squad named for AIS training camp this weekend

Qantas Joeys Head Coach Alistair Edwards has selected a 26-player squad for a training camp at the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), Canberra from Friday 30th March – Sunday 1 April 2012.

Edwards and his Qantas Joeys Assistant Coach Tony Vidmar will be using their first training camp together as the first part of their preparation for the AFC U-16 Championship IR Iran 2012 which will be held in from 21 September to 6 October.

Bright Appiah *AIS*
Jordan Brown *AIS*
Aaron Calver *NSWIS*
Daniel De Silva *WA NTC*
Luke Eyles *TAS NTC*
Alex Gersbach *NSWIS*
Brendan Gonano *AIS*
Jack Iredale *WA NTC*
Andre Jannese *AIS*
Steve Kuzmanovski *AIS*
Brandan Lundy *NSWIS (Northern)*
Kevin Ly *NSWIS*
Darcy Madden *AIS*
Mark Marino *SA NTC*
Todd Norris *AIS*
Matthew Ntoumenopoulos *AIS*
Reece Papadimitrios *NSWIS (Northern)*
Dylan Pickert *AIS*
Liam Rose *NSWIS*
Mathew Schmidt *AIS*
Lucas Spinella *AIS*
Paul Stephens *TAS NTC*
Jordan Thurtell *AIS*
Jeremy Tshonga *AIS*
Jaidan Walker *NSWIS (Northern)*
Benjamin Warland *AIS*

Arnold Honoured as PFA Coach of the Season

Central Coast Mariners Head Coach, Graham Arnold, has been named the 2011/12 Professional Footballers Australia (PFA) Hyundai A-League Coach of the Season.

Presented with his award by PFA Executive member and Central Coast Mariners captain, Alex Wilkinson, at a media event at Soccer5s, Tuggerah, the astute Arnold was overwhelmingly selected as the A-League Coach of the Season by PFA members across all ten Hyundai A-League teams.

Arnold is the fourth coach to be honoured as coach of the season by the PFA. He follows Ange Postecoglou (Brisbane Roar – 2010/11), Viteslav Lavicka (Sydney FC – 2009/10), and Aurelio Vidmar (Adelaide United – 2008/09) as recipients of the award.

Central Coast Mariners, who were confirmed as Hyundai A-League Premiers following their away win at Wellington on Sunday, have maintained a high level of performance under Arnold's guidance both domestically and also internationally this season.

Brendan Schwab, Chief Executive of the PFA, said from Melbourne: "The continued success of the Central Coast Mariners despite their heartbreaking loss in last year's Championship decider shows how Graham and his playing squad have been able to overcome many of the obstacles put in their way."

"It is even more to the credit of Graham that the side has continued its success despite coming from the A-League smallest market, and the need to transfer key players out of the club. Despite these issues, Graham has successfully developed a number of young players, many of whom should become the mainstay of future Socceroo teams."

"I wish Graham and his club the best in both the forthcoming A-League finals and the Asian Champions League," Schwab concluded.

After being presented with his award, a surprised, yet elated Arnold said: "I'm humbled to win this award. Being recognised by the players as the top coach this season speaks volumes for what we are doing here."

"(But) I can't speak highly enough of the players. I think I've said many times before that I come to training with a smile on my face, and I turn up to work this these guys who are not only very good footballers, but are wonderful human beings."

"I haven't had one problem with one player since I've been here, it's definitely a joy."

Arnold also praised his staff, a group of men who have contributed greatly to the club's success this term.

"Of course I'm very very proud of the players but also my staff," he said.

"Phil Moss my assistant coach takes a lot of pressure off me and does a wonderful job. Andrew Clark for me is the best football fitness coach in Australia by far, and John Crawley is the best goalkeeper coach."

PFA Team of the Season

Goalkeeper: Mathew Ryan (Central Coast Mariners)
Defenders: Michael Marrone (Melbourne Heart), Patrick Zwaanswijk (Central Coast Mariners), Joshua Rose (Central Coast Mariners)
Midfielders: Thomas Broich (Brisbane Roar), Fred (Melbourne Heart), Mitch Nicholls (Brisbane Roar), Aziz Behich (Melbourne Heart)
Forwards: Paul Ifill (Wellington Phoenix), Besart Berisha (Brisbane Roar), Archie Thompson (Melbourne Victory).
Substitutes: Clint Bolton (Melbourne Heart), Andrew Durante (Wellington Phoenix), Nicky Carle (Sydney FC), Carlos Hernandez (Melbourne Victory), Harry Kewell (Melbourne Victory)

Graham Arnold deservedly takes out the PFA top coach gong. Photo: TIM SIZE

SHORT PASSES

GLEN MOSS SIGNS FOR PHOENIX

Former Wellington Phoenix goalkeeper Glen Moss is returning to the Hyundai A-League club on a three-year contract.

Moss, 29, was between the posts for the Phoenix during the club's first two seasons before moving to Melbourne Victory and then on to Gold Coast United.

A New Zealand international, Moss has spent the latter half of this season out injured after tearing his abductor muscle while taking a routine goal kick.

While Gold Coast are unlikely to be in the competition next season after owner Clive Palmer had his A-League licence revoked, the deal to take Moss back to Wellington was well advanced before then.

RODRIGO VARGAS RELEASED

Melbourne Victory wishes to advise that defender, Rodrigo Vargas, has been released after 140 Hyundai A-League appearances, over six success-filled seasons.

Since joining the club in season two of the Hyundai A-League, the 33 year-old made more appearances than any other player, helping it to win not one, but two Premiership/Championship doubles, scoring 7 goals along the way.

Vargas joined Melbourne Victory from Victorian Premier League club, Green Gully, and quickly established himself as one of the competition's premier defenders, continually putting his body on the line, yet very rarely missing games through injury.

Reflecting on his time at Melbourne Victory, Vargas said he's grateful for the opportunity given to him, "It's been a privilege being able to play for the most successful club in the league, in my hometown, in front of my family and friends, for the best fans in the country."

"The two Premiership/Championship doubles won in front of packed out Etihad Stadium's remain highlights of my time at Melbourne Victory," he added.

Melbourne Victory Managing Director, Richard Wilson, said, "Roddy has been a fantastic professional over the years and we thank him for his great contribution to our club."

"He was a warrior in every sense of the word, continually getting himself up for games when others may have opted to sit out through injury."

"The fact that he won a Victory medal among such a talented and successful squad is testament to himself and his capabilities as a footballer," Wilson added.

The club will honour Rodrigo at the 2011/12 Victory Medal Night and also ensure he is presented to the Melbourne Victory faithful next season to recognise and celebrate his A-League career.

KENNEDY WINS JETS PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Hunter Ports Newcastle Jets goalkeeper Ben Kennedy has capped off a stellar season by being named the Club's Player of the Year.

Kennedy has made 24 appearances for the Jets in 2011-12, keeping five clean sheets and making 79 saves.

NSW Premier League Round 1 Preview

By Joseph Carlucci

The 2012 NSW Premier League season kicks off this weekend in what promises to be an action-packed season of football in NSW.

Last season's top-two **Sydney Olympic** and Sydney United commence as favourites for the title, though the likes of **Bonnyrigg White Eagles, Blacktown City FC and Sutherland Sharks** will be aiming to better their finals series finish last time around.

The new boys **Blacktown Spartans** will have a tough task in their debut season, though the newly promoted boys will be keen to use their state of the art home ground to their advantage and give the 'big boys' a real tough time.

The season also poses another chance for glamour clubs **Marconi Stallions and APIA-Leichhardt Tigers** to bounce back following indifferent 2011 campaigns, meanwhile **Rockdale City Suns, Parramatta FC and South Coast Wolves** could certainly spring a surprise despite their lesser experienced squads.

South Coast Wolves open proceedings at John Crehan Park on Saturday evening as **Bonnyrigg White Eagles** visit the South Coast. Both sides will be looking to improve on their 2011 efforts and the home side will be eager to once again make John Crehan Park their fortress this season.

Trevor Morgan's group possesses much youth, though it will be the experienced campaigners that will be expected to lead the charge on Saturday. Jacob Timpano in defence will call the shots from the backline, meanwhile Sasho Petrovski and Mark Picciolini will be asked to find the goals.

The White Eagles have undergone some big changes in playing personnel over the off-season, though as always Brian Brown's men are expected to figure in the top-five come the season's end.

The trip South did prove a difficult one last season for Bonnyrigg as the side only just salvaged a point in the closing stages of that encounter - and more of the same is expected this weekend. In the attacking third, the additions of Mitchell Long and the Gaitazis brothers Chris and Harris should provide new striker Robbie Younis with the goal scoring opportunities, meanwhile Luka Dukic's experience in the backline alongside Alex Mansueto will make the Wolves job of breaching the White Eagles' rearguard somewhat of a challenge.

NSW teams gather at the season launch during the week.

At Seymour Shaw, **Sutherland Sharks** will aim to make a positive start to the season as **APIA-Leichhardt Tigers** visit Seymour Shaw. The Sharks have maintained a tremendous home record in recent seasons, and Robbie Stanton's men – led once more by George Souris – will be a mountain to overcome for visiting sides.

Panni Nikas will again carry the weight of expectation in creating the Sharks' forward forays with Nick Stavroulakis the engine in midfield. The additions of Blake Powell and Matt Gordon could cause the Tigers some grief on the encounter, with the Sharks possessing a very strong playing squad.

Much is expected of the Tigers this season with John Turner's newly assembled playing group, and what better way for the Tigers to make an early statement than upset the Sharks on Saturday. The experienced heads of Franco Parisi and Nick Rizzo will be expected to lead the group, with the additions of Michael West, Danial Cummins and Adel El Jamal certainly strengthening an inconsistent backline from last season.

With both sides eager for success this season, an open encounter is expected in the Shire this weekend.

At Marconi Stadium, the newly promoted **Blacktown Spartans** start its Premier League campaign with a tough first-up match against the **Stallions.** The reigning Super League Champions have their work cut out, though with the expectation on the shoulders of the Stallions, Ben De Haan's Spartans may well be up for causing an upset.

The Spartans' coach will have the services of experienced Premier League players Chris Bedzo, Sean Mitchell and Steven Veleski with influential goalkeeper Carlos Salidarre – and these players will need to bring their A-Game on Saturday.

The expectation around **Marconi Stallions** is very high this season following a disappointing 2011. Coach Luke Casserly has assembled a very strong team with a lot of emphasis on the side going forward. The additions of Shane Webb, Jamie McMaster, Milorad Simonovic and Daniel Severino have the Stallions as one of the most aggressive sides – interest will be around how long it takes the team to gel, as the Stallions may well prove to be a real title contender.

At home, the Stallions will be extremely disappointed should they not pick up maximum points on the opening weekend of the season.

2010 Champions **Blacktown City FC** open their campaign at home against Manly United FC on Sunday afternoon in what is traditionally an open, end-to-end, encounter.

Blacktown City coach Mark Crittenden will be looking to unveil new signings Ryo Watanabe and Ryuji Miyazawa as young guns Ray Miller and Travis Major aim to further consolidate their developments in the top league of the past few seasons.

The home side can expect a tough encounter against the Northern Beaches side as Craig Midgley always fields a side with strong physical characteristics.

Captain Marc Richards will lead the chargers from the backline with Scott Balderson and Colin Illey very capable of creating goals. In the front third, Adam Foti will be expected to score the goals with Balderson and Damir Prodanovic also finding their feet in front of goal in pre-season matches.

Parramatta FC have a tough opening encounter at home against **Sydney United 58**. Despite the Eagles' squad featuring a number of younger, and lesser known names in the competition, experienced coach Lee Sterrey is more than capable of pulling a rabbit of the hat in his first season in charge at Melita Stadium. The club has recruited three foreign players, Irishman Mark O'Reilly and the Japanese duo of Akiyoshi Saito and Taichi Kojima, along with Central Coast Mariners' youth league striker Kwabena Appiah-Kubi, and really is an unknown coming into the season.

Their first test is against a well established Reds squad. Coach Jean-Paul De Marigny has the luxury of retaining the larger part of last season's squad, and with the additions of Mitchell Stamatellis and Stjepan Paric, the squad is very well-balanced across the park.

With the Reds hoping to make a statement early in the season, and the Eagles too aiming to start the season on the front foot, supporters will be treated to an entertaining match on Sunday.

In the final match of the round kicking off at 5pm, defending Champions **Sydney Olympic** kick-start season 2012 with a home clash against **Rockdale City Suns,** on Sunday. Despite wholesale changes in playing personnel at Belmore following last season, coach Peter Tsekenis has recruited well, and will again be looking to implement his attacking style of play. The Blues added attacking trio Sam Awad, Joel Wood and Kutaiba Elrich to the group, along with the experience of Marton Vass. Strong in defence, the visiting Suns will be up against it on Sunday to break down Brett Studman and Blaz Dejanovic.

The Suns supporters too are expecting a better 2012 season, and despite a difficult first round clash, the side will look to pressure their more fancied opponent at Belmore.

A sturdy defence with Askin Oygur and Josh Lawson possessing much experience, coach Wally Savor has the added bonus of a number of interesting youngsters at his disposal. In the front third, Jason Naidovski will be expected to find goals this season. The burly striker didn't have the best 2011 campaign, though certainly does have the characteristics to spearhead the Suns' assault this season.

NSW Rd 1 Fixtures

Saturday March 31st 2012
Sutherland Sharks v APIA Leichhardt
7pm – Seymour Shaw
South Coast Wolves v Bonnyrigg WE
7pm – John Crehan Park
Marconi Stallions v Blacktown Spartans
7.30pm – Marconi Stadium

Sunday April 1st 2012
Blacktown City FC v Manly United
3pm – Lily Homes Stadium
Parramatta FC v Sydney United
3pm – Melita Stadium
Sydney Olympic v Rockdale City Suns
5pm – Belmore Sports Ground

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SCOREBOARD

TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Central Coast Mariners	27	15	6	6	40	24	16	51
2 Brisbane Roar	27	14	7	6	50	28	22	49
3 Perth Glory	27	13	4	10	40	35	5	43
4 Wellington Phoenix	27	12	4	11	34	32	2	40
5 Sydney FC	27	10	8	9	37	42	-5	38
6 Melbourne Heart	27	9	10	8	35	34	1	37
7 Newcastle Jets	27	10	5	12	38	41	-3	35
8 Melbourne Victory	27	6	11	10	35	43	-8	29
9 Adelaide United	27	5	10	12	26	44	-18	25
10 Gold Coast United	27	4	9	14	30	42	-12	21

Finals Series Week 1

Friday 30 March 2012
Wellington (4) v Sydney FC (5)
Venue: Westpac Stadium
Local kick-off: 8.00pm (6.00pm AEDT)

Saturday 31 March 2012
Brisbane Roar (2) v CC Mariners (1)
Venue: Suncorp Stadium
Local kick-off: 4.30pm (5.30pm AEST)

Sunday 1 April 2012
Perth Glory (3) v Melbourne Heart (6)
Venue: nib Stadium
Local kick-off: 5.00pm (7.00pm AEST)

Sunday 8 April
CC Mariners (1) v Brisbane Roar (2)
Bluetongue Stadium
Kick off: 5.00pm local time

ROUND 27 RESULTS

Brisbane Roar 2
(Fitzgerald 58, Lambadaridis 90)
Gold Coast United 1
(Bowles 29)
Crowd: 6102 at Skilled Park, Robina

Perth Glory 4
(Smeltz 23, 48, 62, 66)
Melbourne Victory 2
(Hernandez 22, Milligan 45)
Crowd: 9,724 at nib Stadium

Sydney FC 3
(Cazarine 12, Chianese 29, 33)
Newcastle Jets 2
(Bridges 26, Wheelhouse 84)

Adelaide United 1 *(van Dijk 37)*
Melbourne Heart 1 *(Babalj 68)*
6,411 at Hindmarsh Stadium

Wellington Phoenix 1
(Bertos 80')
Central Coast Mariners 2
(Sutton 44', Ibini 51')

TOP GOAL SCORERS

19 - Besart Berisha (Roar)
13 - Shane Smeltz (Glory;
9 -Jeremy Brockie (Jets), Ryan Griffiths (Jets), Carlos Hernandez (Victory),
8 - Harry Kewell (Victory), Eli Babalj (Heart), Mitch Nichols (Roar), Bruno Cazarine (SFC), Serge van Dijk (Adelaide United)

The Roar's Besart Berisha wins the Golden Boot in his first season in the A-League.

A-LEAGUE TEAM OF THE WEEK FINAL ROUND

Compiled by Steven Talevski

GK: Mathew Ryan – Ryan had another tremendous game between the sticks as he was able to deny the Phoenix a number of chances as he helped the Mariners to the Premiers Plate.

RCB: James Donachie – Brisbane Roar's eighteen year old debutant had a debut to remember as he supported fellow central defender Matthew Jurman well. The youngster was solid in the air and on his feet as the Roar picked up the three points in the M1 derby.

CB: Patrick Zwaanswijk – The Dutch defender was a solid rock in defence for the Mariners against an attacking Phoenix side as Zwaanswijk helped the Mariners to the all-important three points to secure first place in the league this season.

LCB: Matthew Jurman – Brisbane's young central defender led his side well in defence with first gamer James Donachie by his side as the Roar defeated the Gold Coast 2-1.

RM: Andrezinho – Perth's Brazilian winger was at his best against the Victory as he troubled Melbourne's Mathew Foschini all night and set up two goals in Perth's four nil romp of the Victory.

CM: Brandon O'Neill – The seventeen year old took advantage of his first start for the Glory through an injured Jacob Burns and had a superb game for Perth as he controlled the midfield with some exceptional passing.

CM: Osama Malik – Malik continued his good form from the Champions League as he anchored the Adelaide midfield in another solid performance late in the season.

CM: Brett Emerton – Emerton had a man of the match performance against Newcastle where his hard work paid off with two assists.

RF: Joel Chianese – The youngster continues to improve and scored a double within four minutes to help secure a finals spot for Sydney in their 3-2 victory over the Jets.

ST: Eli Babalj – The young Heart striker makes the team of the week for the second round in a row after he was able to weave through the Adelaide defence and hit a well-placed shot from just outside the penalty area for Melbourne's equaliser.

LF: Shane Smeltz – Smeltz became the all-time A-League leading goal scorer this past weekend scoring a bag of four goals against the Victory to move to 62 goals, two more than his fellow striker on the opposite side that night, Archie Thompson.

Star Man

Shane Smeltz
Perth Glory

Smeltz put himself once again in the record books this weekend by becoming the A-Leagues top ever goal scorer with 62 goals, two more than second most Archie Thompson.
The New Zealand international scored a bag of four goals against the Victory and looked unstoppable during the encounter between the two sides.
Smeltz's goal scoring ability will be a key if Perth Glory is to go and potentially take out the title this final's campaign.

Thank God It's Friday... GW is now available at all good newsagents every Friday

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Mariners clinch HAL Premier's Plate

Wellington Phoenix 1

CC Mariners 2

Match Details

Wellington Phoenix 1 (Bertos 80')
Central Coast Mariners 2 (Sutton 44', Ibini 51')
Referee: Strebre Delovski

Wellington Phoenix: 1. Mark Paston (Gk), 2. Manny Muscat, 3. Tony Lochhead (24. Alex Smith 73'), 6. Tim Brown, 7. Leo Bertos, 8. Paul Ifill, 9. Chris Greenacre (14. Mirjan Pavlovic 54'), 17. Vince Lia, 18. Ben Sigmund, 21. Dani Sanchez (12. Nick Ward 60'), 22. Andrew Durante

Subs Not Used: 20. Tony Warner (Gk)

Yellow Cards: Brown
Red Cards: None

Central Coast Mariners: 1. Mathew Ryan (Gk), 3. JOshua Rose, 4. Pedj Bojic, 6. Patrick Zwaanswijk, 7. John Hutchinson, 9. Bernie Ibini (12. Troy Hearfield 82'), 11. Oliver Bozanic, 14. Michael Mcglinchey, 17. Tomas Rogic (22. Mustafa Amini 62'), 18. Alex Wilkinson (C), 19. John Sutton (23. Adam Kwasnik 72')

Subs Not Used: 20. Justin Pasfield (Gk)
Yellow Cards: None
Red Cards: None

By Joe Gallagher

Central Coast Mariners picked up their second Premiers' Plate last Sunday afternoon with a 2-1 win in Wellington against the Phoenix.

The Mariners dominated throughout the match – and indeed the season – and deserved both the three points and the Plate despite a nervy final ten minutes in which the Phoenix nearly snatched a point.

Ex-Wellington striker Shane Smeltz' heroics the night before for Perth meant Wellington needed to win by three or more goals to collect third spot on the ladder, but despite the all-or-nothing nature of the match, coach Ricki Herbert opted against sending out a particularly offensive line-up.

In fact, Leo Bertos was the only change for Herbert as he returned to the wing in place of Alex Smith.

The Mariners knew only a win would secure their place at the top of the table with Brisbane yet to play, and were confident having beaten the Phoenix twice already this campaign.

Graham Arnold fielded a familiar line-up with only Mustafa Amini removed from the team which delivered a 1-0 win against Adelaide last weekend.

His replacement, Tomas Rogic, had already scored a goal against the Phoenix this year in the Mariners' 2-0 win a month ago.

The match started with Arnold's tight midfield diamond leaving plenty of space out wide for Bertos, particularly on the right wing, to deliver the ball into the box but it was the Mariners who had the first genuine chance of the match.

Bernie Ibini shrugged off the challenge of Ben Sigmund at the back for the Phoenix and was thwarted only by an excellent sprawling save from Wellington goalkeeper Mark Paston in the 33rd minute.

Two minutes later Wellington could have taken the lead with first Paul Ifill's shot beaten away by Mat Ryan. The rebound fell to Chris Greenacre but the Englishman's side-footed effort was straight at Ryan.

And if that was a gilt edged chance, Greenacre wasted an even simpler opportunity in the 42nd minute – this time after beating the offside trap from an excellent through ball from Ifill. At this point, Wellington were almost resigned to ending the half without making inroads into their three goal target.

But they fell asleep at the very end of the half – Andrew Durante's fluffed clearance fell to Ibini, who picked out Oliver Bozanic on the left and delivered a pinpoint cross to John Sutton. The Englishman's superb glancing header was too good for Mark Paston and Central Coast had earned a valuable halftime lead that more than deflated the hosts.

The second half started as the first spell ended – with a goal to the visitors. Durante's error at the back was pounced upon by Michael McGlinchey, who threaded a brilliant ball into the path of Ibini. The young striker pounced, and had a deserved goal to his name after threatening throughout.

It was a forgettable moment for Phoenix captain Durante, who was celebrating his 100th game for Wellington with two rare but costly mistakes at the back. At this point, the best Wellington could have hoped for was a point to deny the visitors their celebrations, and to their credit they rallied.

Herbert rung the changes with Smith, Nick Ward and Mirjan Pavlovic all entering the match and the trio injected some much needed venom into the Wellington attack. First, Tim Brown sprayed a header wide of the goal, before Pavlovic was the second Phoenix player to have spurned a glorious one-on-one opportunity when he was threaded through by Ifill, his heavy first touch simply passing the ball to Ryan.

Ibini nearly had his second after he headed McGlinchey's excellent cross against the bar minutes later and Wellington were on the cusp of being handed their worst home loss this campaign.

But they did get on the scoresheet when Bertos' curling free kick found the net. The goal had more than a hint of fortune about it – Bertos' celebration suggesting it was more of a cross than a shot – but it ensured a tense final ten minutes as Wellington tried desperately to spoil the Mariners' party.

But they could not create another genuine chance and the Phoenix were consigned to their fifth home loss of the season – more defeats in one season at Westpac Stadium than they have ever suffered.

They enter the finals series low on confidence on a two game losing streak, and with their home fortress a far less daunting challenge for the travelling Sydney FC next weekend.

But on the other hand, Arnold's side complete a wonderful season in which they led the league for the majority of the campaign.

Central Coast Mariners Head Coach, Graham Arnold, was understandably delighted with the result post-match, and his first piece of silverware with the club.

"I am so delighted, and proud of the players and what they've achieved," he said.

"I think a lot of people would have discarded us as any chance to win the Premiership this season after last year, but the character to bounce back has made this success all the more worthwhile."

"The team has been through a lot – losing Matty Simon and Rostyn Griffiths has not made it easy. But the culture and character within the group is so strong."

"I'm also so thankful to my staff. Phil Moss, John Crawley, Andrew Clark and the entire medical and support staff. That we've still got 22 fit players with Champions League as well as A-League is amazing."

"I want the boys to enjoy tonight and tomorrow because they thoroughly deserve some down time and to celebrate a brilliant performance."

"But Wednesday we start again. The Finals Series is a new competition. Brisbane home and away is a great test, a great rivalry and we're looking forward to two bumper games to try and make the Grand Final again."

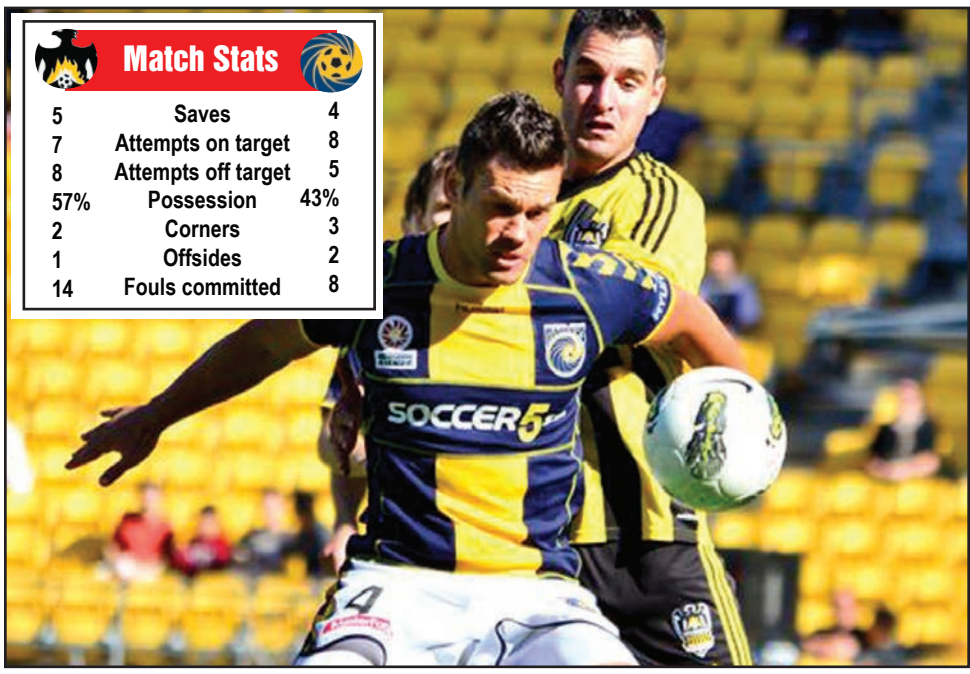
"I'm so proud."

Their win means they have swept the Phoenix this year and they will enter the finals series as favourites to take out the A-League title.

Wellington, on the other hand, will need a huge improvement if they are to feature past week one of the playoffs.

The retiring Tim Brown of the Phoenix slides in to win the ball against Mariner John McClinchey, with Mustafa Amini coming to his aid. Photo: DANIEL PANTER

Patrick Zwaanswijk and Alex Wilkinson try their best to stop Vince Lia.
Photo: DANIEL PANTER



Match Stats

5	Saves	4
7	Attempts on target	8
8	Attempts off target	5
57%	Possession	43%
2	Corners	3
1	Offsides	2
14	Fouls committed	8

Mariner Pedj Bojic uses his bofy well to hold of his Phoenix opponent.
Photo: DANIEL PANTER

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Smeltz to the fore in glorious victory

Perth Glory

4

Melbourne Victory

2

Match Details

Perth Glory 4 (Smeltz 23, 48, 62, 66)
Melbourne Victory 2 (Hernandez 22, Milligan 45)
Crowd: 9,724 at nib Stadium

Glory: 1.D.Vukovic, 4.B.Mehmet, 5.S.Pantelidis, 9.S.Smeltz, 12.S.Neville, 13.T.Dodd, 14.S.McGarry (18.J.Makarounas 45'), 17.T.Howarth, 19.J.Risdon, 26.B.O'Neill (29.S.Mitchinson 76'), 27.Andrezinho (15.T.Amphlett 73').
Yellow cards: Howarth, Smeltz
Red cards: None

Victory: 1.T.Velaphi, 2.M.Foschini, 3.Fabio, 5.M.Milligan, 10.A.Thompson, 13.D.Ferreira, 16.C.Hernadez, 17.J.Jeggo (4.P.Franjic 71'), 19.I.Cernak (29.J.Davies 63'), 22.H.Kewell, 28.U.Luzardo.

Yellow cards: Jeggo, Fabio, Kewell
Red cards: None

By Gareth Morgan

Inspired by a stunning four-goal performance from Shane Smeltz Perth Glory romped to a thrilling 4-2 win over Melbourne Victory on Saturday night.

In a pulsating contest at nib Stadium, the home side trailed twice in the first-half but turned on the style after the break to chalk up an eighth home win of the season.

Perth Glory are now in the box seat to finish third And Ferguson and host two home finals, but by the stellar performances of several other players in addition to his free-scoring Kiwi hit-man.

Brandon O'Neill belied his tender years with a superbly accomplished display in central midfield, Andrezinho wreaked havoc down the left flank and Scott Neville slotted seamlessly into the unfamiliar role of centre-back.

O'Neill and Neville were among no fewer than six West Australians under the age of 23 named in the matchday squad, four were teenagers and two made their debut.

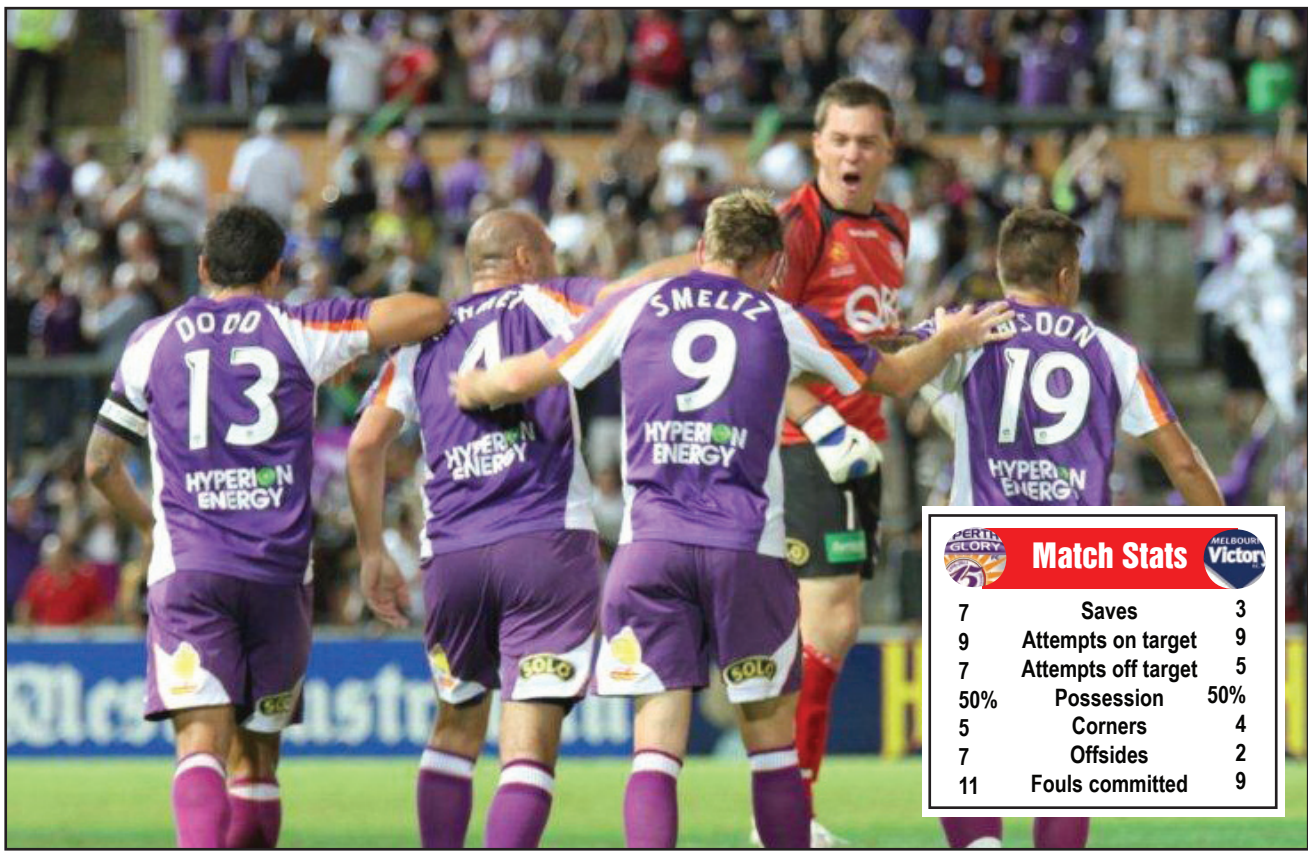
With a vociferous home crowd right behind them, the men in purple began brightly and were almost gifted the lead as early as the third minute.

Making his first return to nib Stadium, Tando Velaphi misjudged a Matthew Foschini back pass, allowing it to go through his legs before scrambling back to prevent an own-goal completing his embarrassment.

Moments later, however, the former Glory 'keeper made amends as he went full length to keep out a low drive from Steven McGarry who had made a bursting run from midfield and at that stage it looked only a matter of time before the hosts broke the deadlock.

But Victory gradually settled, found their rhythm and carved out a decent chance of their own on 15 minutes when Danny Vukovic was forced to pull off a fine save to keep out a fiercely-struck effort from Harry Kewell.

With the game already stretched even before the first quarter had elapsed, Glory again went close as Velaphi kept out a free-kick from Andrezinho who was causing plenty of problems down the left flank, but within sixty seconds it was Victory who got their noses in front.



Four to the floor: Perth Glory players prepare for finals football in emphatic fashion.
Photo: EDUARDO MORGAN

Match Stats

Perth Glory		Melbourne Victory
7	Saves	3
9	Attempts on target	9
7	Attempts off target	5
50%	Possession	50%
5	Corners	4
7	Offsides	2
11	Fouls committed	9

Fabio split the home defence with a superb through ball and although Vukovic got a hand to Carlos Hernandez's shot, he couldn't keep it out of the net.

Yet in keeping with the breakneck pace of the proceedings, Glory were back on level terms within a minute.

Andrezinho pounced on a Foschini error and crossed for Shane Smeltz who powered home a spectacular dining header to bag his tenth goal of the campaign.

Both sides continued to throw men forward for the rest of the opening stanza, Billy Mehmet coming within centimetres of giving Glory the lead on 43 minutes with a low shot after Smeltz's persistence had forced Ubay Luzardo to cough up possession in a dangerous area.

But it was the men from Victoria who would ultimately head into the sheds with the advantage as Glory could only half-clear a Hernandez free-kick, Fabio drove the ball back into the box and it fell kindly for Mark Milligan who gleefully lashed a close-range half-volley past Vukovic.

The nib Stadium faithful needed to make the most of the half-time breather because the drama continued right from the start of the second period.

17 year old Jesse Makarounas was introduced for his debut appearance of the season as a replacement for McGarry who had tweaked a hamstring and the youngster's first job was to stand back and watch his side restore parity with a perfectly-executed free-kick.

The irrepressible Andrezinho whipped a vicious ball into the box and Smeltz supplied the deft glancing header that left Velaphi helpless.

And still the chances continued to flow at either end in what was rapidly developing into one of the most entertaining encounters seen at nib Stadium this season.

Vukovic foiled Thompson after he latched onto an Hernandez cross just after the hour mark before Smeltz strode once more onto centre stage to give Glory the lead for the first time and move ahead of his Victory rival at the top of the A-League's all-time goalscoring chart.

Mehmet's turn in the box was too clever for Milligan who hauled him down and Glory's marquee man rifled the resulting spot-kick past Velaphi.

But the New Zealand international wasn't done.

Just four minutes later he carved out a chance for himself, cut inside on his right foot and unleashed a magnificent drive from just outside the box that beat Velaphi all ends up and took Glory out to a 4-2 lead.

That fourth goal seemed to take the wind out of Victory's sails and although Hernandez squandered the simplest of chances to grab his side a lifeline with 15 minutes left, they rarely threatened after that.

Glory continued to out-pass and out-manoeuvre their vastly more experienced opponents and were great value for the rapturous reception that greeted the final whistle.

Shane Smeltz scores from the spot to secure his hat-trick.
Photo: EDUARDO MORGAN

Mark Milligan put Victory in front just before the break.
Photo: EDUARDO MORGAN

Finals for Sky Blues at Jets expense

By David Mason

Sydney FC 3

Newcastle Jets 2

Match Details

Sydney FC 3 (Bruno Cazarine 11, Joel Chianese 30, 33)
Newcastle Jets 2 (Michael Bridges 26, Jobe Wheelhouse 84)
Allianz Stadium
Crowd: 14,494
Referee: Chris Beath

Sydney FC: 20. Ivan Necevski (gk), 4. Pascal Bosschaart, 5. Michael Beauchamp, 7. Brett Emerton, 8. Karol Kisel (2. Sebastian Ryall '89), 9. Bruno Cazarine, 10. Nick Carle (19. Mark Bridge '83), 12. Shannon Cole, 15. Terry McFlynn (c), 16. Joel Chianese (17. Terry Antonis '77), 21. Scott Jamieson.
Sub not used: 1. Liam Reddy (gk).

Yellow cards: Terry Antonis 86.
Red cards: Nil

Newcastle Jets: 1. Ben Kennedy (gk), 2. Taylor Regan, 4. Nikolai Topor-Stanley, 6. Ben Kantarovski (26. Connor Chapman '81), 9. Michael Bridges (11. Tarek Elrich '66), 10. Ruben Zadkovich (8. Jeremy Brockie '46), 12. Jobe Wheelhouse, 13. Sung-Hwan Byun, 22. Ali Abbas, 23. Ryan Griffiths, 25. Jacob Pepper.
Sub not used: 19. Matthew Nash (gk).

Yellow cards: Ruben Zadkovich 40, Nikolai Topor-Stanley 47.
Red cards: Nil

Sydney FC has qualified for the 2011/12 Hyundai A-League finals after a pulsating 3-2 win over Newcastle Jets at Allianz Stadium saw them finish the regular season in 5th place.

The victory sees Sydney FC travel across the Tasman Sea to take on Wellington Phoenix on Friday night in the 4th v 5th elimination final.

Sydney FC had numerous heroes on the night. Striker Joel Chianese bagged a double. Marquee men Brett Emerton and Nick Carle were standouts. Slovakian midfielder Karol Kisel didn't stop running and Bruno Cazarine started the procession with the opening goal.

Sydney FC presented out-going coach Vitezslav Lavicka with a present before the match as it looked likely to be his last in charge at Allianz Stadium but if Sydney FC beats Wellington and Melbourne Heart beats Perth next weekend, Sydney FC will play another home semi final.

Lavicka made two changes to the team that drew 2-2 with Melbourne Heart, rewarding Shannon Cole for his two-goal substitute's performance and bringing Kisel back into the side with Rhyan Grant and Terry Antonis the unlucky pair. Antonis took his place on the bench alongside Sebastian Ryall, Mark Bridge and Liam Reddy.

The game with started with Sydney, who needed to win the game to progress to the finals, trying to make the running with Newcastle content to sit back and play on the break.

It wasn't a pretty opening with neither side having any real chances. The match resembled a chess battle but the mindset of both teams changed in the 11th minute when Cazarine opened the scoring for the Sky Blues.

Cazarine scored his 8th goal of the season with a bullet header, getting on the end of an inch perfect Emerton cross to put the home side in the box seat.

It set the scene for a see-sawing afternoon and in the 19th minute Newcastle had a free kick, which could easily have been given as a penalty. The ensuing shot from the edge of the penalty area was blocked by the Sydney FC wall and from a quick break, Sydney should have gone 2-0 up.

Emerton gain was the engineer, playing in Kisel who was free on goal. He rounded Ben Kennedy but could not cut the ball back to the waiting Chianese, who would have only had to sidefoot the ball into an empty net.

The energy of Sydney continued to cause problems for the Jets and Scott Jamieson was the next to break free after causing an error in the Newcastle defence. Jamieson took the ball to the byline in the 25th minute but could not get it through the Jets cover defence.

The match turned again in the 26th minute when Michael Bridges equalised after he tapped in from the edge of the six yard box following a direct run and cross from Ruben Zadkovich.

At 1-1, the game was evenly poised but you got the feeling there was plenty more to come.

Three minutes later the match took a turn the Sydney FC way when Pascal Bosschaart hit Chianese with a beautiful diagonal ball and the young striker's shot took a deflection and ballooned over Kennedy to make it 2-1 Sydney.

Chianese scored his second of the game in the 33rd minute thanks to some terrier midfield defence, a delightful pass from Emerton and a beautiful first touch and finish from Chianese. It was champagne football and Sydney had taken a 3-1 lead.

The game threatened to boil over in the 40th minute when Zadkovich hit Jamieson with a crude challenge, which resulted in a yellow card. Newcastle coach Gary van Egmond then replaced the former Sydney FC midfielder at half time, introducing Jeremy Brockie.

Sydney FC had the first opportunity after the break when Chianese broke free and tried to beat the final defender despite the fact both Emerton and Kisel were free on the edge of the penalty area in the 51st minute.

Two minutes later Ali Abbas blazed wide with the goal at his mercy after Bridges made a smart run down the left channel and his shot was parried into Abbas' path by Ivan Necevski.

It was end-to-end action.

The match hit a dead patch in the middle stages of the second half, as both sides resembled punch drunk heavyweight fighters who had thrown everything at each other in a frantic first 45 minutes.

But, it pounced into life in the 85th minute when Newcastle pulled a goal back through Jobe Wheelhouse after he was first to react to a Nikolai Topor-Stanley header than came back off the crossbar.

The last five minutes saw Newcastle throw caution to the wind and both sides had opportunities to find the back of the net but it was Sydney FC who hung tough and progressed through to the finals with a 3-2 win.

Sydney FC now faces Wellington Phoenix in an elimination final at Wesptac Stadium (Wellington) on Friday night.

Match Stats

0	Saves	5
13	Attempts on target	5
5	Attempts off target	4
48%	Possession	52%
11	Corners	6
4	Offsides	2
15	Fouls committed	10

Sydney FC scrape into the top six and now have a chance for a real crack at the title. Photo: BEN NEVILLE

Karol Kisel (SFC) attemots to round Ben Kennedy (Jets). Photo: BEN NEVILLE

Taylor Regan (Jets) gives chase to Scott Jamieson (SFC) Photo: BEN NEVILLE

Last gasp Roar shatters Gold Coast

Gold Coast United 1

Brisbane Roar 2

Match Details

Gold Coast United 1 (Bowles 29')
Brisbane Roar 2 (Fitzgerald 58', Lambadaridis 90')
Venue: Skilled Park
Referee: Peter Green
Crowd: 6102

Gold Coast United: 20.Jerrad Tyson (gk), 2.Josh Brillante, 3.Michael Thwaite (c), 4.Zac Anderson, , 11.Jake Barker-Daish (33. Mitch Cooper 71'), 15.Adama Traore, 16.Maceo Rigters, 18.James Brown (10.Tahj Minniecon 32'), 22.Peter Jungschlager, 23.Dylan McGowan, 28.Daniel Bowles (12. Dylan Macallister 73').
Substitutes not used: 40.Chris O'Connor (gk)

Yellow cards: Thwaite (76')
Red cards: Nil

Brisbane Roar: 3. Shane Stefanutto (c), 4. Matt Jurman, 6. Erik Paaratlu (25. George Lambadaridis 61'), 7. Besart Berisha, 8. Massimo Murdocca, 9. Kofi Danning (24. Nick Fitzgerald 46'), 10. Henrique, 18. Luke Brattan (12. Matt Mundy 83'), 19. Jack Hingert, 20. Andrew Redmayne (GK), 29. James Donachie.
Substitutes not used: 1. Michael Theoklitos (GK)

Yellow cards: Fitzgerald (64')
Red cards: Nil

By Jarrod Ellis

After a disastrous season Gold Coast United were forced to endure a painful defeat in what could have been the club's final game when they were defeated 2-1 by Brisbane Roar on Sunday night.

The match looked set for a 1-1 draw after Roar striker Besart Berisha wasted an excellent opportunity in the 86th minute to give his side the three points.

However Brisbane wasn't finished and it was substitute and former Goal Weekly contributor George Lambadaridis who secured the win for the visitors, rocketing a powerful drive into the top corner of the net to ensure that Gold Coast ended what may have been their final match in defeat.

Despite collecting the three points it was a hollow victory for the Roar as they could only watch on earlier in the afternoon as Central Coast Mariners defeated Wellington Phoenix 2-1 to secure the Premier's Plate.

With a five point gap there was no way for Brisbane to retain their league title and Ange Postecoglou responded by resting Thomas Broich, Matt Smith, Mitch Nichols, Ivan Franjic and Michael Theoklitos for the potentially fiery encounter with Queensland rivals Gold Coast United.

With so many changes to the regular starting eleven it wasn't a surprise when Brisbane looked disjointed over the opening stages of the match.

Gold Coast was struggling to get control of the ball but it was the home team who was the first to test the opposition keeper. Former Roar youth player Daniel Bowles cleverly beat the offside trap but his finish didn't match the lead-up play and he fired his shot straight at Andrew Redmayne.

Brisbane looked like having won a penalty shortly after when Jack Hingert was brought down on the edge of the area but referee Peter Green insisted the offence happened outside the box.

In the 29th minute the visitors were made to look foolish once again by Bowles as he beat the offside trap once again, only this time he made no mistakes, beating Redmayne one-on-one to give United a 1-0 lead.

Postecoglou's men looked to hit back immediately with some strong pressure, but struggled to break down a resolute Gold Coast defence.

Substitute Tahj Minniecon nearly doubled the home side's advantage in the 37th minute with a curling shot, but his effort went just wide of the far post and the scoreboard remained unchanged at halftime.

Match Stats

0	Saves	5
13	Attempts on target	5
5	Attempts off target	4
48%	Possession	52%
11	Corners	6
4	Offsides	2
15	Fouls committed	10

The Roar celebrate after former Goal! Weekly contributor, George Lambadaridis, scores the winner.
Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

Brisbane opened the second half strongly, pushing Gold Coast back into their defensive areas and Henrique had a shot on the turn inside two minutes but he pushed his effort just wide of the goal.

The Roar looked more purposeful after the restart and it wasn't long until they found an equaliser. Having entered the match as half-time substitute for Kofi Danning, Nick Fitzgerald had the impact Postecoglou would have been hoping for when he found the back of the net in 58th minute.

The young winger cut across the top of the United box, before curling a low shot which cannoned off the post and into the goal.

Brisbane was controlling the match by this stage, with Gold Coast looking to hit them on the counter by using the pace of some of their younger players.

Berisha had a golden opportunity to score a record-breaking 20th of the season when he was played in by Henrique, but under pressure the Albanian striker spooned his shot over the bar from close range.

However it was a man scoring his first Hyundai A-League goal who put Brisbane Roar in front for the first time on the stroke of full time.

Finding himself on the edge of the box and with the ball at his feet, youngster George Lambadaridis curled a perfect left-foot shot into the top corner of the goal.

The goal proved the difference with Postecoglou pleased with his side's ability to refocus following the disappointment of the result from the day's earlier game.

"We were disappointed we didn't get a chance to defend the Premiers Plate," Postecoglou said.

"We had to refocus the boys to make sure we finished off our season positively with 90 minutes against the Gold Coast.

"We had enough guys out there with motivation to do well with them getting an opportunity.

"The second half we looked a bit better, a bit brighter and it was good for us to get a couple of goals."

With the Premier's Plate having evaded them Brisbane finish second heading into the Finals Series and will face off against Central Mariners for an automatic place in the Grand Final.

The first leg of that encounter is scheduled for Saturday March 31 and Brisbane will have the chance to set the tone for the encounter as they play hosts at Suncorp Stadium.

Gold Coast's Daniel Bowles scores a well taken goal to put the pressure on their Plate chasing rivals. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

Roar keeper Andrew Redmayne in full flight to make a save.
Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

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Young Reds hold finals bound Heart

Adelaide United

1

Melbourne Heart

1

Match Details

Adelaide United FC 1 (van Dijk 37' (pen))
Melbourne Heart 1 (Babalj 68')
Referee: Adam Kersey
Crowd: 6,411 @ Hindmarsh Stadium

Adelaide United line-up: 20.Mark Birighitti (gk), 2.Osama Malik, 4.Jon McKain, 5.Daniel Mullen, 6.Cassio (c) (22.Iain Fyfe 63'), 9.Sergio van Dijk, 10.Dario Vidosic (26.Liam Wooding 46'), 12.Antony Golec, 15.Jacob Melling (13.Ricardo Da Silva 76'), 21.Francisco Usucar, 23.Evan Kostopoulos

Substitutes not used: 1.Eugene Galekovic (gk)
Yellow Cards: Mullen 78'
Red Cards: Nil

Melbourne Heart line-up: 1.Clint Bolton (GK), 2.Michael Marrone, 4.Simon Colosimo, 5.Fred (c) (7.Rutger Worm 75'), 6.Matt Thompson, 10.Wayne Srhoj, 13.Jonatan Germano, 16.Aziz Behich, 18.Curtis Good, 19.Eli Babalj, 23.Mate Dugandzic (11.Alex Terra 66')

Substitutes not used: 3.Brendan Hamill, 30.Sebastian Mattei (GK)
Yellow Cards: Colosimo 37', Srhoj 44'
Red Cards: Nil

By Daniel Quinn

A predominantly youthful Adelaide United FC has kept finals bound Melbourne Heart to a 1-1 draw in the Reds' final match of the Hyundai A-League season.

Sergio van Dijk's 50th Hyundai A-League goal, which came by way of a 37th minute penalty, was cancelled out by Heart striker Eli Babalj in the 68th minute, with neither side able to conjure up a winner.

The relatively inexperienced Reds fought through until the final whistle to take a point from their final match, the result ensuring that the Reds would finish the season in ninth spot.

After the emotion and high of Tuesday night's AFC Champions League victory over Gamba Osaka, it was always going to prove a difficult assignment for the Reds to lift up to a similar intensity in a game that had little bearing for them against a Heart side that itself had already guaranteed a spot in the top six.

With Coach John Kosmina resting a host of experienced players, he handed opportunities to some of United's up and coming stars, Evan Kostopoulos and Jacob Melling both receiving their first starts, while Liam Wooding was yet another Youth player to figure for the senior team this season.

In a less than frenetic opening, it took until the 22nd minute for the first serious chance, Babalj glancing a header just wide of the post.

A purposeful Balabj was then on target with a fierce drive that United keeper Mark Birighitti, who was given a start in his final Hyundai A-League game for the club, did well to parry away in the 27th minute before he was called into action again two minutes later as he saved a left footed Mate Dugandzic effort.

At the other end the Reds had not bothered Heart keeper Clint Bolton in the first half an hour but in the 37th minute that all changed when referee Adam Kersey awarded the home side a penalty.

Possibly wary of Daniel Mullen's threat in the air after the defender's aerial display against Gamba, Simon Colosimo was alleged to have illegally felled the Reds' number five as Cassio's free kick swung into the penalty area.

Having gone since the end of January and seven games in searching for his 50th Hyundai A-League goal, van Dijk stepped up to send Bolton the wrong way and celebrate the milestone in his 102nd appearance.

Having showed glimpses of class in the opening 45 minutes, Dario Vidosic failed to reappear for the second half after complaining of hamstring tightness, his absence giving a chance for local 18 year old Wooding to make his senior debut appearance.

Babalj tried to inspire a Heart equaliser as he took aim from long range but again his radar was off.

In the 63rd minute a large cheer went up around Hindmarsh for the introduction of Iain Fyfe, the defender making his first appearance since returning from South Korea as he replaced Cassio, who in a terrific gesture passed on the captain's armband to Birighitti.

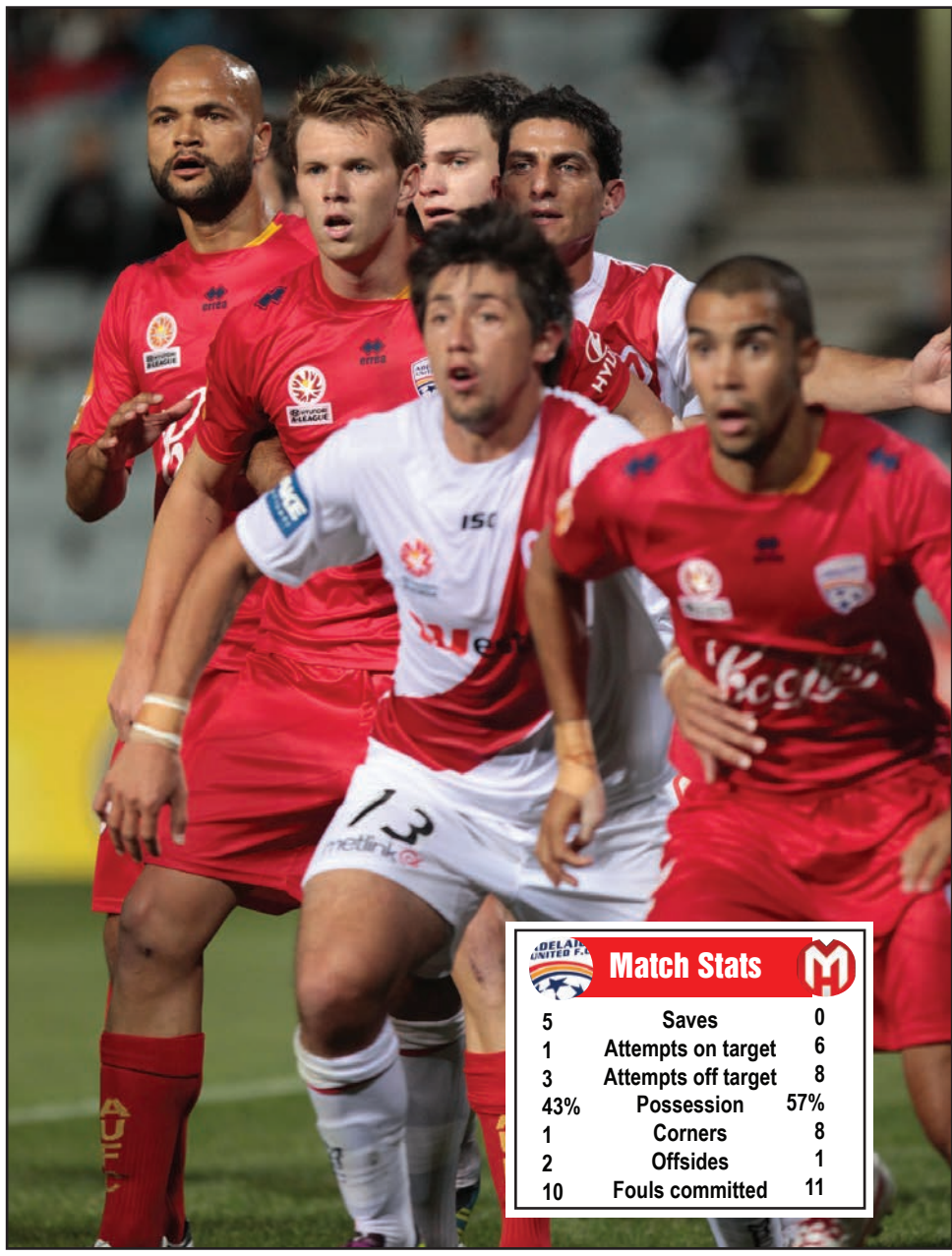
A sweetly worked Melbourne counter attack almost caught the Reds out, Matt Thompson flashing a shot just over the bar.

Babalj had been a threat throughout and in the 68th minute he would not be denied as he put the Heart level, finishing off a fine individual run in the front third to give Birighitti no chance of keeping the shot from finding the back of the net.

Kosmina made his final substitution with 15 minutes to go bringing on Ricardo Da Silva in place of Jacob Melling, United's younger and more inexperienced brigade getting a chance to show their worth.

Unlike the weather, chances dried up for the rest of the match despite the Heart pressing for a late winner and the Reds trying for their own on the counter, neither side able to add to the 1-1 score line.

With their domestic season over, all of



Match Stats

5	Saves	0
1	Attempts on target	6
3	Attempts off target	8
43%	Possession	57%
1	Corners	8
2	Offsides	1
10	Fouls committed	11

Adelaide and Heart players refuse to give an inch. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

Serge van Dijk makes no mistake from the spot.
Photo: ADAM BUTLER

Eli Babalj hits the target for Melbourne Heart.
Photo: ADAM BUTLER

goal! Weekly

PICS OF FINAL ROUND

Phoenix star Paul Ifill signs autographs for his adorning Yellow Fever fans . Photo: DANIEL PANTER

The future is orange? They might have just missed out on the Premier's Plate, but Brisbnae Roar fans will certainly fancy their chances for back-to-back titles. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

Les Shorrock's Action Packed Picture Page

With their season coming to a close Adelaide United fans will look to fly the flag in the Asian CVhampions League. Photo: ADAM BUTLER

The End Is Nigh? Gold Coast fans will hope their prayers are answered as negotiations commence regarding the feasability of their survival . Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

Sydney FC stand tall for a Jets free-kick. Photo: BEN NEVILLE

Fresh from signing a new deal at the club, Ian Ferguson prepares for Perth Glory's finals assault at the WA leg of the finals launch during the week. Photo: EDUARDO MORGAN

The long good-bye: Gold Coast's Dylan MacAllister thanks fans and bids them a farewell for possibly the last time. Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE

Wellington Phoenix (4) v Sydney FC (5) — Fri 30 Mar Westpac Stdm 8pm (6pm AEDT)

Phoenix Line Up

1. Mark Paston (GK)
2. Manny Muscat
3. Tony Lochhead
6. Tim Brown
7. Leo Bertos
8. Paul Ifill
9. Chris Greenacre
11. Daniel
12. Nicky Ward
14. Mirjan Pavlovic
17. Vince Lia
18. Ben Sigmund
20, Tony Warner (GK)
21. Dani Sanchez
22. Andrew Durante (C)
24. Alex Smith

In: Daniel (returns from injury)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: Lucas Pantelis (knee injury - indefinite)

By Joe Gallagher

To dwell on form before this Friday's elimination final with Sydney FC would be a very risky move indeed for Ricki Herbert.

His Wellington Phoenix side, albeit finishing fourth on the ladder, have failed to win in their last three matches, while the visiting Sydney have only lost once in their last seven.

The silver lining? That loss was against Wellington in Sydney late in February. It even capped off a clean sweep for the Phoenix over their visitors on Friday night, after twin victories in Wellington late in 2011.

And having not won in Wellington since 2008, it will take something special for Sydney to claim a victory on Friday night.

But they are better equipped now to break their duck than ever – stars Brett Emerton and Nick Carle looked on top of their game last weekend and their strike force of Joel Chianese and Bruno Cazarine are just starting to hit their stride, all three goals against Newcastle Jets coming from the duo.

What Ricki Herbert would do for such potency in attack. Wellington's most recent outing, a 2-1 loss to Central Coast Mariners on Sunday saw them pay the price for wastefulness in front of goal, spurning at least three golden opportunities to score.

They will likely maintain a similar line-up to that which was defeated by the Mariners, with Tony Lochhead recovering from a niggle and Brazilian midfielder Daniel possibly returning to the selection frame after several months out injured.

With victory in New Zealand no longer as unfeasible as it once was, Herbert's home 'fortress' has been consigned to five losses this term, more than it has ever suffered throughout one campaign. Granted, four of them were against the three sides which finished above the Phoenix, but the reality is that a significant mental barrier is no more for the travelling Sydney.

There is also sudden-death tension between the sides after their meeting in 2010's Preliminary Final, won by the Sky Blues 4-2 after a contentious handballed goal to Chris Payne – a grudge that some Phoenix players and staff concede has not faded.

And to add spice to an already fascinating match-up, the match will be either Phoenix vice-captain and foundation player Tim Brown's final game, or the swansong of Lavicka and Karol Kisel for the Sky Blues.

The former's midweek decision to hang up his boots will have come as a shock to many Phoenix players and fans, but will be even more incentive to keep his season – and career – alive for another week.

On the other hand, outgoing coach Lavicka departs Sydney after three successful seasons during which time he won a Championship and Premiership double in his first campaign. Should Sydney lose in Wellington, it will be his last game in charge of the side.

Vice-captain Karol Kisel is another who, if defeated, would play his last game for Sydney FC before returning to Slovakia at the conclusion of the Sky Blues' campaign.

So with such sentiment and emotion on the line, not to mention the looming climax of another enthralling campaign, this match is more than likely to live up to the A-League finals' promise of 'Sweat and Tears'.

Kiss of Death
Phoenix 2-1 SFC

Sydney FC Line Up

2. Sebastian Ryall
4. Pascal Bosschaart
5. Michael Beauchamp
7. Brett Emerton
8. Karol Kisel
9. Bruno Cazarine
10. Nick Carle
12. Shannon Cole
15. Terry McFlynn (c)
16. Joel Chianese
17. Terry Antonis
19. Mark Bridge
20. Ivan Necevski
21. Scott Jamieson
23. Rhyan Grant
24. Mitch Mallia
30. Ryan Norval (gk)
one to be omitted

In: 24.Mitch Mallia, 30. Ryan Norval (promoted)

Out: 1. Liam Reddy

Unavailable: Nil

Brisbane Roar (2) v CC Mariners (1) — Sat 31 Mar Suncorp Stdm 4.30pm (5.30pm AEST)

Roar Line Up

1. Michael Theoklitos (GK)
2. Matt Smith (C)
3. Shane Stefanutto
4. Matt Jurman
5. Ivan Franjic
6. Erik Paaratlu
7. Besart Berisha
8. Massimo Murdocca
9. Kofi Danning
10. Henrique
12. Matt Mundy
16. Mohamed Adnan
17. Mitch Nichols
18. Luke Brattan
19. Jack Hingert
20. Andrew Redmayne (GK)
22. Thomas Broich
24. Nick Fitzgerald.
two to be omitted
Coach: Ange Postecoglou

In: 16. Mohamed Adnan (returns from injury), 18. Luke Brattan (returns from injury), 22. Thomas Broich, 2. Matt Smith, 17. Mitch Nichols (all)
Out: 25. George Lambadaridis, 29. James Donachie (both omitted)

Unavailable: Nil

By Jarrod Ellis

After twenty-seven rounds of football the A-League Finals Series has arrived once again, pitting the top six sides in the country against one another to decide the A-League Championship.

Over the course of the season two clubs, Central Coast Mariners and Brisbane Roar have undisputedly established themselves as the class of the league. Central Coast having only claimed the A-League Premiers Plate on the final day of the season to hold off a fast-finishing Brisbane.

This Saturday Central Coast and Brisbane will resume hostilities in the first leg of the Major Semi-Final, the winner to progress automatically to the Grand Final.

Few will have forgotten last season's finale where the Roar narrowly defeated the Mariners and that is sure to be on the minds of the players as Saturday approaches.

The Mariners have been the most consistent side this season in claiming the Premiers' Plate but have struggled in recent weeks as they've had come to terms with the departures of Matt Simon and Rostyn Griffiths.

The sudden absence of two such experienced players has forced the likes of Tomas Rogic, Musta Amini and Bernie Ibini-Isei to the fore and Graham Arnold will be hoping that they can adapt to the pressure of finals football.

Ibini-Isei has shown a liking to playing against Brisbane in previous encounters and in a two-legged match where the Mariners will be looking to score an away goal, his pace and sharpness could prove decisive.

Brisbane's high defensive line was exploited earlier in the season when Central Coast travelled to Suncorp and it's difficult to imagine that newly crowned PFA A-League Coach of the Year won't look to seize upon Brisbane's frailties once again.

Matt Ryan is another of the Mariner's players whom appears to relish games against Brisbane. The young-stopper is quickly becoming the most highly-regarded keeper in the league and if he is at his best then the Roar will need to find their shooting boots to get one into the net.

Brisbane will enter the match with a relatively fresh squad given that several key members of the team were rested for the Gold Coast United game after Central Coast secured the league title.

Thomas Broich, Matt Smith, Mitch Nichols, Ivan Franjic and Michael Theoklitos will have all had a week and a half off come Saturday.

The Roar's only real injury concern comes in the form of Mohammed Adnan, the Bahraini defender having injured his calf in last week's game against Beijin Guoan. Adnan has established himself as one half of the first-choice Brisbane centre-back pairing this season and should he miss the game it would have to be considered a blow for the Roar's chances.

In all the tie should be a hard-fought affair, the two sides have shown how close of a match they are in previous encounters and with both have upcoming Asian Champions League fixtures and neither will want to have to overturn a deficit in the second leg.

With a home Grand Final as the prize up for grabs expect Brisbane to patiently probe the visitors defence whilst Central Coast look to exploit the spaces behind the Roar's defence.

With two teams so familiar with one another and so evenly matched it could very well come down to the simple matter of who takes their chances on the day.

Kiss of Death
Roar 1-1 Mariners

Mariners Line Up

2.Daniel Mcbreen
3. Joshua Rose
4. Pedj Bojic
6. Patrick Zwaanswijk
7. John Hutchinson
9. Bernie Ibini
11. Oliver Bozanic
12. Troy Hearfield
14. Michael Mcglinchey
16. Trent Sainsbury
17. Tomas Rogic
18. Alex Wilkinson (C)
19. John Sutton
20. Justin Pasfield (Gk)
22. Mustafa Amini
23. Adam Kwasnik

In: 2. Daniel Mcbreen, 16. Trent Sainsbury (both promoted)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: Nil

Perth Glory (3) v Melb Heart (6)

Sun 1 April nib Stadium 5pm (7pm AEST)

Glory Line Up

1.Danny Vukovic (Gk)
2.Josh Mtchell
3.Bas Van Den Brink
4.Billy Mehmet
5.Steve Pantelidis
7.Jacob Burns
9.Shane Smeltz
10.Liam Miller
12.Scott Neville
13.Travis Dodd
14.Steven Mcgarry
15.Tommy Amphlett
17.Todd Howarth
18.Jesse Makarounas
19.Josh Risdon
20. Neil Young
26.Brandon O'neill
27.Andrezinho
28. Ndumba Makeche
29.Sam Mitchinson
35. Dean Heffernan
six to be omitted

In: 2.Josh Mtchell (Returns From Back Injury), 3.Bas Van Den Brink (Returns From Calf Injury), 7.Jacob Burns (Returns From Rib Injury), 10.Liam Miller (Returns From Back Injury), 35. Dean Heffernan (Returns From 1 Game Suspension)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: 6.Chris Coyne (Achilles), 16. Evan Berger (hamstring)

By John Clark

The Perth Glory will be hoping to mark their first ever home final with a win, when the Heart travels to NIB Stadium on Sunday.

The Glory finished a club record third last weekend thanks mainly to a man who was setting records all over the place. Kiwi striker Shane Smeltz scored a club record four goals against the Melbourne Victory to record his place in history as the league's top scorer.

It also took his tally to 13 goals for the season, which (yep you guessed it) is another club record. The Glory hit man was at his absolute best, his game capped by a brilliant solo run and finish took secure the Glory all three points. It was the second time that the Glory has put four past the Victory at home this season and the win was made all that more impressive by the fact that they had to recover from a 2-1 halftime deficit minus star players Jacob Burns, Bas Van Den Brink and Liam Miller.

Their opposition this week, the Melbourne Heart, also have a front man who is in brilliant touch in Eli Babalj. Babalj scored his ninth goal of the season last week as his exquisite solo effort secured a point for the Heart.

The Heart now go into the finals on a six game unbeaten stretch, however they'll be the first to admit that their form has been rather poor over the last three weeks. The battle between Van Den Brink and Babalj looms as a vital one as the big striker looks to make his mark on finals football.

The last time these sides met it was the Glory taking all three points at AAMI Park. In a strange quirk it was the third time in a row that fixtures between these two sides had ended 1-2 in favour of the away side. On that occasion Steve McGarry and that man Smeltz found their way on to the scoresheet. The Heart will however be buoyed by the fact that they haven't ever lost to Perth in their three travels to Western Australia.

You would think that finals football would suit the Heart with sides pushing hard to win the match the boys from Melbourne should be able to hit them hard on the counter with Fred pulling the strings behind Babalj and the lightening quick Mate Duganzdic. I'm expecting close to a packed house at NIB Stadium as the Perth looks to make a return to being a major player in the Australian football landscape once more.

This should has all the makings of a classic, but for one reason or another I'm not as convinced about Perth as I am the Heart. I'll tip that the trend of away teams winning 2-1 will continue and the Heart will advance to the second week of the finals to meet the winner of Wellington and Sydney.

Heart looks for Glory in finals debut

Kiss of Death
Glory 1-2 Heart

Heart Line Up

1.Clint Bolton (GK)
2.Michael Marrone
3.Brendan Hamill
4.Simon Colosimo
5.Fred ©
6.Matt Thompson
7.Rutger Worm
8.Kristian Sarkies
10.Wayne Srhoj
11.Alex Terra
13.Jonatan Germano
15.David Williams
16.Aziz Behich
17.Jason Hoffman
18.Curtis Good
19.Eli Babalj
23.Mate Dugandzic
27.Craig Goodwin
30.Sebastian Mattei (GK)
four to be omitted
Coach: John van 't Schip

In: Kristian Sarkies, David Williams, Jason Hoffman, Craig Goodwin (all promoted)

Out: Nil

Unavailable: Adrian Zahra (1 week – quad)

Compiled By Alvaro Rodriguez

WHAT'S HOT

As the A-League finals descend upon us, congrats to the Central Coast Mariners for winning the minor premiership! A cracker of a finals series awaits, which one would think should see a hotly-anticipated rematch of last year's Grand Final; fingers crossed! On other A-League fronts, the cleanout at Melbourne Victory has begun in earnest with the release of stalwarts Roddy Vargas and Tom Pondeljak - whilst it is a shame that 2 loyal servants of the club depart without a final on-field appearance for the fans, in another sense it can be seen as a sign of how serious MV are about a clean break and steering the Victory ship to hitherto-unknown waters; evidenced also by their signing of GCU young gun Adama Traore. The upcoming finals aside, it has been a most-eventful Hyundai A-League season and I am surely not alone in suggesting that despite the hiccups the league has experienced, its future is as bright as ever. Bring on the finals, and then season 2012/13!!!

WHAT'S NOT

The league's failure to have the minor Plate ready at the Phoenix v CCM clash smacks of distinct unprofessionalism, and we must keep in mind that even trivial things like that can be wielded by the league's market-competitors as sticks to beat it with. Finally, the fate of Gold Coast United is still unknown and whilst I readily admit I considered them as good-as-gone upon hearing Clive Palmer's licence had been revoked by the FFA, I have since realised that for the FFA to offhandedly dispense with them would do nothing but give credence to the rantings of Palmer and other self-styled 'enemies' of the Lowy/Buckley administration. Basically I hope that GCU survive and under a proper ownership tenure are allowed to prosper and grow in the A-League, again fingers crossed.

So on that note I thank you, the readers who have hopefully enjoyed and learned from my articles, shared in this particular journey within the beautiful vastness of the world game. I wish you all well, and see you next season!!!

With many a future still uncertain, the crystal ball will be getting a half decent workout

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This is the final edition of Goal! Weekly for the summer run.
For continued coverage of the A-League Finals Series and the Premier Leagues please go to www.goalweekly.com

goal! Weekly

Robert Di Fabio

The seventh edition of the Hyundai A-League has been a compelling campaign, both on and off the pitch. It wasn't always smooth sailing off the field; however the football has be a pleasure to witness on it. Technical standards continue to escalate in an upward trend, while the final weekend of the home-and-away season encompassed a thrilling climax – Central Coast edged its way past the finishing line to deny Brisbane Roar of successive Premiers Plate titles. With the 27-round season now culminated, let's depict and analyse each team's season, the highs and lows ahead of the highly anticipated A-League finals series.

Gold Coast United: 10th

It's been an arduous season for the competition's problem-child, with the Surfers Paradise club seemingly on life support, uncertain on its A-League future beyond this campaign. After a series of controversial remarks – condemning FFA and illustrating utter contempt towards the code and its affiliates – the national governing body hastily decided to revoke Clive Palmer's A-League license. Since, FFA took ownership of the club for the remaining four games of the term. With the forthcoming media rights agreement up for negotiation, the competition can ill-afford to contract to a nine-team league.

An innovative community ownership model has been submitted to FFA, where a consortium of businessmen, accompanied with interest from south-east Asia are interested in bankrolling the Queensland club. Statistics imply that the Gold Coast region is an attractive proposition for a football club. Currently it's the sixth-largest Australian market, and is forecast to boast a population of 700,000 residents by 2021.

Under Palmer's egotistic style of management, the club was never going to be an attractive proposition for the Gold Coast community. However, on the pitch, the youthful exuberance demonstrated has been a revelation to watch. Despite being anchored to the foot of the table, this team was by far the most exciting side to win the notorious wooden spoon. With turmoil engulfing the club over the past few weeks, Gold Coast finished the season with integrity, and this must be applauded.

Steered by inspirational leader Michael Thwaite, United's brigade of youth performed shrewdly, exceeding expectations. Zach Anderson, Adama Traore, Mitch Cooper, James Brown, Chris Harold, Ben Halloran and Golgol Mebrahtu are just some of the prodigies that made waves around the competition. With insecurity hanging over the embattled club, many these players have already secured contracts elsewhere, or are on the verge of doing so.

Interim Gold Coast boss Mike Mulvey believes a team on the coastal strip will add value to the A-League, and given his ability to produce youth – winning two National Youth League titles with Gold Coast – expect to see more talent unearthed next season if the club is still in business.

Adelaide United: 9th

The Reds failed to rekindle the form which saw them grand finalists on two occasions, and third in 2010-11 to finish ninth in an underwhelming campaign. Adelaide, widely seen as one of the dominant forces on the domestic scene, couldn't replicate its achievements from season gone by. Following a catastrophic beginning to the season, the board anonymously agreed to part-ways with Dutchman Rini Coolen on December 18, replaced by John Kosmina – who recently celebrated his second-coming at Adelaide with a one-year contract extension, with an option for a second.

Opinion is divided on Kosmina's appointment, with some believing he isn't the ingredient which will drive the club forward on the back of disappointment in the A-League. Although, it's difficult to argue that he doesn't possess the experience and nous required to build a successful team.

Evidently, Kosmina admires his hometown club, whilst possessing the passion and desire to hoist this club back to the top of the tree.

There are signs of this already in Adelaide's venture on the Asian continental stage. With two wins from as many games, the club is fantastically positioned to make the knockout stages for a third time in its fourth attempt. In many ways, the Reds are fast becoming the A-League's current version of Liverpool – poor on the domestic front, but potent in the cup football arena.

Adelaide appears rejuvenated in the Asian Champions League, and it may just be the catalyst for an improved campaign in 2012-13.

Melbourne Victory: 8th

The competition's biggest and most celebrated club has certainly had a season to forget. A year where many expected Victory to be challenging for the title – with the acquisition of Socceroos luminary Harry Kewell and exciting youngster Marco Rojas – were left with nothing short of an astonishingly tenuous campaign.

Victory, touted as a star-studded side with a legion of attacking options, including Carlos Hernandez and Archie Thompson, couldn't duplicate its accomplishments from previous years. After the first few matches, in many ways it was apparent that rookie coach Mehmet Durakovic wasn't the right man for the job. It's inexcusable; that after a worldwide search, the club's hierarchy managed to hand the A-League's most lucrative coaching assignment to a man who was unequipped for the rigors of such a role. A club of Victory's stature needs a manager who is confident, reassuring and importantly, is a sound spokesman when addressing the media.

After sacking Durakovic, Victory appointed Irish-born Jim Magilton as caretaker boss. He's record of only two wins from 12 matches isn't anything to brag about, however to his credit, he has shown the credentials to take Victory to the next level.

The former Ipswich boss spoke passionately in the press regarding Victory's imminent future – calling for a player overhaul and culture change to aid the club's progression. In many ways, he is correct. Many players have exceeded their stay at the club, while others simply don't seem to have the ability to be an automatic pick for first-team selection.

Melbourne has already begun preparations for 2012-13, with the signings of left-back Adama Traore from Gold Coast United, defensive utility Sam Gallagher from the Mariners and young sensation Julius Davies. Central Coast striker Tomas Rogic is also reportedly in negotiations with Victory.

An important closed-season looms for Victory, with stability the key constituent to re-building this club back to its former glory days.

Newcastle Jets: 7th

The Jets, rebranded itself under the Nathan Tinkler Empire to have a direct correlation with the NRL's Newcastle Knights outfit – both teams donning the burgundy and blue strips as a symbolic gesture for the Hunter Valley region – proved to be a master stroke, with the community getting behind the club. Crowds have risen this term to a healthy average figure in excess of 12,000, a considerable 4,000 better than last season.

The club is in good hands, with stability evident. However, its healthy state off the field failed to transmit into a top-six berth, narrowly falling short after an enthralling 3-2 loss to Sydney FC on the final day of the regular season.

Gary van Egmond, in his second stint at the club, after replacing Branko Culina – sacked on the eve of this campaign – will be disappointed with the club's table position, although he will get a sense of optimism knowing that the club is moving in an upward direction.

Jacob Pepper has been a late-season revelation for the Jets. The 19-year-old was promoted from the NYL team in December 2011, later on signing a two-year deal to remain with the Novocastrians and also earning his first appearance for the Olyroos, in their scoreless draw with Iraq in March.

With a full pre-season to work and mould his playing philosophy – a similar structure to the revered Brisbane Roar – van Egmond's troops should be better prepared for what is an articulate game-style, needing time and patience to master.

Melbourne Heart: 6th

It's been a breakthrough season for Melbourne's expansion club, earning a place in this year's finals series, subsequently earning bragging rights over its cross-town rival Melbourne Victory. Despite claiming a play-off berth for the first time in the club's short history, it will be vastly disappointed to only scrap through the last hurdle, finishing sixth in a 10-team competition.

On the cusp of the New Year, Heart occupied second position – after trouncing Sydney 4-0 across the border – holding high ambitions of challenging for the Premiership Plate, or at the very least securing a home-final. However, a torrid run of form saw the red-and-whites only claim two wins in its final 14 outings. Hardly the form warranted, in pursuit of championship glory.

It isn't an ideal scenario for Heart, although it will be buoyed knowing it has the fire-power to cause any team havoc on its day, most notably against defending champion Brisbane– having triumphed over Roar once and drawn twice in this campaign.

Captain Fred knows the feeling of finals pressure, having played a significant role in the 2007 Grand Final triumph with Victory. The Brazilian playmaker provided five assists for Archie Thompson, in the 6-0 rout of Adelaide United.

There's no underlying secret, if Fred can act as the architect en route to goal, then Heart has every chance of proceeding past the first week of the finals.

John van't Schip's tenure in the A-League will conclude once Heart's finals voyage comes to an end. Thus far, when assessing his stay in Melbourne, results wise, it has been a tad underwhelming. On a two-year deal worth $1.4-million, fans would have anticipated for more than eighth and sixth on the ladder.

At the other end of the scale, the Dutchman has help guide the club in its vision, cultural standing and football ethos. He nurtured and developed young talent, bringing through many players as first-team regulars, including Michael Marrone, Brendan Hamill, Eli Babalj, Curtis Good and Aziz Behich.

Van't Schip's legacy at Heart is one of great debate. Is one finals appearance enough to merit praise? Or is the notion of player development and building for the future outweigh its performances in the club's inaugural two years? The general consensus from Heart fans seems to be the latter.

A record breaking year in more ways than one...

Sydney FC: 5th

The Sydneysiders will be participating in finals football this season, but they had to do it the hard way, triumphing 3-2 over Newcastle last Sunday, in a do or die fixture at Allianz Arena. After the game, outgoing Sydney FC coach Vitezslav Lavicka described the win as a 'great relief', in a campaign which can be described as topsy-turvy.

On many occasions this term, the Sky Blues have been at their inconsistent best, playing a meticulous brand of football in one half, before looking quite the opposite on the turn of the interval. It isn't the formula the club will warrant heading into the play-offs, although it will feel a sense of buoyancy, knowing that it has the artillery to threaten any team.

The return of Socceroos winger Brett Emerton has been a positive injection not only for the Sky Blues, but for the competition. Like Kewell, Emerton has taken his time to find his feet in the A-League, although he has proven his worth, amid a must improved showing in the second half of the campaign. His performance on Sunday was arguably the best since his domestic return – providing two assists and playing a pivotal role in the outcome of the game. On current form, the 33-year-old could offer the impetus for Sydney to progress through its finals campaign.

Meanwhile, Joel Chianese's rise to fame has given Sydney a surge in confidence, providing another attacking option in the final third. After only making his A-League debut in round 19, the 22-year-old has impressed on the centre stage, with fans already drawing comparisons with ex-Sydney striker and current Socceroos Alex Brosque. Chianese's brace last weekend illustrated the aptitude he acquires, and is definitely one with a bright future.

To date, the Sky Blues would be disappointed with the season is has endured. With lofty ambitions of a top-four placing and a home final, their primary objective wasn't achieved. On a positive note, crowds have increased – coinciding with the signing of Emerton – with an average home gate of around 12,000. Nonetheless, Sydney has proven that when the team is playing with confidence and composure, it has the talent and grit to challenge any team. How far they go in the finals, remains to be seen.

Wellington Phoenix: 4th

When pundits and fans were given their predictions during the pre-season, many envisaged the Nix to finish near the foot of the table – bearing in mind the issues inundated at the club prior to round one, amid budget constraints with player signings and a precarious future with its ownership – not to claim a top-four placing.

Although, the Kiwi's have surpassed expectations yet again and are now firmly in the hot seat to have a crack at the A-League championship. Despite its dour form leading into the play-offs – obtaining a mere solitary point in its last three outings – it has richly deserved the accolades it has achieved.

A stern assignment awaits the Phoenix, when it entertains an invigorated Sydney outfit infront of what should be an animated crowd at the Caketin. English-born Barbadous international Paul Ifill will play an imperative role for the host's. His experience and expertise in big games could be the vehicle to Wellington's progression in the finals series. The 32-year-old has had an interrupted season with injury, although he has proven a critical ingredient to his team's fortunes. His seven-goal tally may be less than what fans had expected, however his ability to display moments of individual brilliance –as portrayed in his stunning equaliser against Melbourne Heart in round 25 – could pave the way for a Phoneix triumph.

After controversy swarmed the 2010 preliminary final – when the Sky Blues scored a dubious winner from an apparent handball – Wellington will be eager to extract revenge on their Sydney counterparts. Playing on their home turf, this could be their moment to gain retribution.

Perth Glory: 3rd

After living in the shadows of its former glory days – in the now defunct National Soccer League – Perth is finally beginning to emulate the success it was once renowned for. Since the inception of the revamped domestic competition, the A-League, the West Australian club has only featured in one finals series from six seasons.

On the contrary, it has been a breakthrough season for the Perth, whose fans have endured much frustration and disappointment after making the transition from the NSL, where it was crowned champions on two occasions in 2003 and 2004.

Come this weekend, the Glory will be hosting its first finals fixture in the A-League. It has been a taxing journey for the ardent supporters in the west, but one they will cherish with high regard.

With the objective of earning a home final, Perth owner Tony Sage was true his word, granting a contract extension to coach Ian Ferguson during the week. The deal will see him remain at the helm for an additional two-year period – a just reward after many fans were calling for his head earlier in the campaign.

In an historic day for the club this weekend, Perth will play host to Melbourne Heart. In an unusual turn of events, this season, the Glory has prevailed over its opposition on two occasions at AAMI Park, but let its guard slip on home turf.

With momentum cultivating at the Glory, it will be difficult to see an out-of-from Heart side succeed, in what is regarded as perhaps the most gruelling away trip in the competition.

For Heart to have any hope of thriving in the west, it must contain Perth striker Shane Smeltz. The Kiwi is in a rich vein of form, booting four past Victory last weekend, and looks primed to have an enormous impact at the business end of the year.

Brisbane Roar: 2nd

It's amazing how, in the space of two years, a club can transform its status from the competition's under-achievers, to the new benchmark of Australian domestic football. Under the insightful tutorship of Ange Postecoglou, the Brisbane Roar coach has enhanced the technicality of the league, through his sophisticated football ethos and astute player development techniques.

Many people fail to remember Postecoglou's accomplishments prior to the commencement of his A-League tenure. In the NSL, the 46-year-old guided South Melbourne to two national championships, while also steering the same club to the 2000 Club World Championship, where it faced English powerhouse Manchester United.

Accordingly, while football is a team game, Postecoglou must take an immense amount of credit for the manner the club is conducting itself in the national arena. Only a few months back in November, Brisbane set a new Australian record for the most consecutive games unbeaten by a professional sports team, surpassing Eastern suburbs' 35-game undefeated run held from 1935-1938 in the NSW Rugby League competition.

It was an awe-inspiring feat for the club, and also for the A-League as a whole. It identified the Roar's unbelievable resilience, willpower and the ability to forge a cohesive game-style unforseen on Australian soil.

While the Roar has won many accolades from the media, in association with the football community, not everything went to plan throughout the 2011-12 campaign. After soaring to unprecedented heights early in the season, things certainly went pear shaped for the reining champions, tasting defeat on five successive occasions.

After a monumental 36-match unbeaten run, the most cynical of sporting pundits wouldn't have predicted such a plunge in form. However, to Brisbane's credit, it overcame its demons to revive their season in fruitful fashion.

Despite coming within a whisker of claiming a second premiers title – negated by Central Coast's victory over Wellington on the final day of the regular season – it will renew its rivalry with the Mariners over a two-leg semi final, knowing the Gosford team still has mental scarring from last season's dramatic grand final comeback.

Besart Besisha has been a revelation for the Roar this term, easily accounting for the Golden Boot award, bagging 19 goals in the process. The Albanian-born striker has been a key component to Brisbane's success this campaign, while other new additions including defender Sayed Mohamed Adnan and midfielder Issey Nakajima-Farran have also played critical roles in the team's development throughout the season.

Undoubtedly, the juggling acts of A-League finals and ACL duties will be a difficult impediment for both the Roar and Mariners to conquer, and could very well play a leading role in the outcome of the play-offs. As evidenced in last year's grand final, little separates two of the competition's heavyweights, an exciting two-leg affair awaits.

Central Coast Mariners: 1st

Following a traumatic finale to last season's grand final – yielding a two-goal advantage in the final minutes, ultimately losing on penalties against Brisbane – the Mariners have, in inspirational fashion fought against adversity to win the first piece of silverware on offer this season, the Premiers Plate.

Under no illusions of the daunting task that confronted them, the Gosford-based outfit demonstrated immense character, fighting spirit and camaraderie to top the table after a 27-round campaign.

It would be naive to believe that the heartache of the grand final loss is not fresh in the players' memories. It's only human nature to feel sorrow and anger after such an event. However, under the guidance of former Olyroos and Socceroos boss Graham Arnold, this community club has once again defied its critics to be at the forefront of Australian football.

While Arnold received a barrage of criticism during his helm with the national teams, his stature at club level appears to be having an inverse affect. After the disappointment of last season, it is truly a testament to his prowess as a coach on what he has achieved with the Mariners.

Interestingly, Arnold recently confessed that the success of Brisbane has been utilised as a motivational tool, for his side to continually prosper on the pitch, in an attempt to set new benchmarks for the team.

This is the attitude that separates the elite from the chasing pack. The continual need for improvement, in every capacity is the approach which must be adopted – and it can be argued that this philosophy is being implemented, with technical standards and the standard of player recruitment on an upward spiral.

In 2011-12 there has been a raft of standout contributions from the Mariners' players. Their fluid style of play and unity within its playing ranks makes for a successful team. Youngsters, in the vein of Matthew Ryan, Mustafa Amini, Bernie Ibini continue to be develop and improve with every game. While Rogic, 19, an exciting young talent, has burst onto the A-League scene in pristine style.

A three-time participant in the A-League finale, Central Coast will be seeking to put right its past failings on the centre stage. While luck was not manifestly on its side last time around, this season could very well be the year of the Mariners. A modern day rivalry with the Roar continues, may the best team prevail.

Follow Robert on Twitter @RobertDi-Fabio

A-League Title Odds

Brisbane Roar	2.50
Central Coast Mariners	2.85
Perth Glory	7.00
Wellington Phoenix	7.00
Sydney FC	13.0
Melbourne Heart	13.0

CENTRAL COAST MARINERS

PREMIER'S PLATE WINNERS 2011/12

PHOTOS: DANIEL FLIS & ADRIAN GAGLIONE

No more Fridays on my mind

I LIKE newspapers. I like the tactile experience of holding a newspaper, turning the pages. I like choosing what I read and I especially like knowing that my newspaper is there for me throughout my day and usually a lot longer.

Often I'll start to read a story then stop and go on to something else. I am easily bored, easily annoyed, extremely self-opinionated and passionate about sports journalism, our football in particular although I am an avid follower of the AFL version too.

I first became involved in producing a newspaper in 1980 when the legendary Laurie Schwab gave me a huge break and hired an untrained young man as his assistant editor at Soccer Action, a national weekly tabloid in the Fairfax stable.

We were part of Newspress at the time, a company backwater, a fact reflected in the quality of management and journalism on display.

Yet I had struck gold because the best journo in the joint was my editor and teacher. (He'd cringe if he read that sentence – for various reasons.)

I looked on in awe as Schwab churned out story after story then took on another role as layout artist and produced page after page day in, day out, almost without blinking an eye.

I look back on those days of my working life with pride and envy. And to this day I meet people involved with our football who remember Soccer Action and still bemoan the fact that a national weekly tabloid that came into being along with Australia's first ever national soccer league eventually folded.

Little did we realise when Soccer Action went in 1987 that the NSL was merely operating under a stay of execution.

There's something about a newspaper devoted to grassroots football that is special. It's not that hard to cover our relatively new whizz-bang A-League as GOAL! Weekly has just done for its first ever complete elite competition season.

But GOAL! Weekly, just as Soccer Action and others before it, also devotes column space to an exclusive coverage of grassroots football that should take centre stage when the A-League is in recess.

That's when niche publications such as GOAL! Weekly should come into their own.

Well, that's how it has been for some years now but after this week it will be different.

After this week GOAL! Weekly will no longer provide weekly newspaper coverage of grassroots football.

And for me Fridays won't be the same. Up at 6.30am, in the car at 7.30am, buy my copy of GW a few minutes later then off to my favourite coffee haunt to kick-start my day.

It's going to be a lengthy recess for GW and the long-range plan is to gear up for a second crack at the A-League season so we won't start publishing again for some months.

Instead GW will focus on developing its website and offer that as the media vehicle through which is will continue its coverage of the sport on a local level.

Truth be told, GW has struggled for years to be a viable business proposition. It has relied on advertisers, on VPL club subscriptions, on a $10,000 annual grant from Football Federation Victoria and the generosity of private benefactors.

Reporting without fear: GOAL! Weekly providing exclusive coverage to grassroots football.

And all that is underpinned by the fact that journalists and photographers work for this publication for free because of their commitment to the sport (or simply because they are mad).

But there always has been a dark cloud hanging over GW's reliance on grants from officialdom for once you get into bed with the establishment your editorial independence is compromised. Take 2011 for example.

Throughout 2008 and 2009, GW was the only media outlet to provide ongoing coverage of behind-the-scenes threats from VPL clubs to form a breakaway competition.

In 2010 GW was the first media outlet to break stories about FFV board upheaval, stories deliberately leaked to us by the current board powerbrokers at a time when they found themselves politically isolated and almost at their wit's end.

Last year GW was given its usual FFV grant but after the furore caused by the previous year's tales of board unrest the $10,000 came with a condition – $5000 at the start of the season and if you behave yourself another $5000 later in the season.

The fact that GW regularly sought larger grants and failed was bad enough from the proprietor's point of view but to now face a thinly veiled threat from officialdom was nearly intolerable.

For the first time since 2005, the VPL, WPL and State Leagues will not be covered extensively in print by GOAL! Weekly.

And all of this while FFV continued to subsidise the production costs of a company providing internet coverage of one VPL match per round, a subsidy that is rumoured to be around the $3000 per game mark over 22 rounds. It may even be more.

Of course that is just a rumour and despite my best endeavours to track the mooted money trail I keep running into a brick wall in the guise of that well-worn and popular contemporary phrase "commercial in confidence."

And the FFV 2011 financial statement posted on its website doesn't make things any clearer. I'm guessing that GW's grant and the costs of subsidising VPL Live are buried in an item under operating expenses on page 10: Sponsorship, Marketing and Communications.

That item records an expense of $527,668, considerably larger than the 2010 figure of $320,718.

And FFV enjoyed a $273,085 operating surplus for the year ending 31 October 2011, up from a 2010 surplus of $178,911.

These figures probably will send GW editor and proprietor Costa Koutropoulos into an apoplectic fit.

He has had an annual battle with FFV in an attempt to get increased funding and this year the federation has pulled the plug altogether.

There's no room in the budget. That's what he was told. Hmmm. Maybe there will be no operating surplus in 2012.

Now I'm not naïve enough to think that the FFV board is so forward thinking and enlightened as to embrace the concept (and the potential danger) of a free and independent specialist publication devoted exclusively to our sport.

But I have to fess up and tell you that I reasoned that we had friends in high places and that somehow they would help us to help you. More fool me.

Anyway, enough of my ramblings. As far as GOAL! Weekly the newspaper is concerned I'm going to crawl into my bunker now, curl up into a big fat ball and hibernate for the next few months. I'm told it's going to be a long, cold winter.

But before I do I'm going to indulge myself by running a previously unpublished story I wrote back in December 2010. It was intended for our website but for once discretion got the better part of valour.

Albeit that it mixes fact with fiction I hope that it highlights one of the functions served by a newspaper such as GOAL! Weekly.

FFV closes in on WeeklyLeaks founder

By Craig MacKenzie, December, 2010

WEEKLYLEAKS founder Costa Koutropoulos continues to defy Victorian football authorities by posting official FFV documents on the GOAL! Weekly website.

Koutropoulos became a marked man when he used his website to post documents relating to a 23 November meeting of the FFV board and its stakeholders.

That meeting was prompted by proposals to change the company structure of the federation and to set up a nominations committee to screen prospective candidates in the upcoming FFV elections.

GW understands that FFV president Tony Dunkerley was a supporter of both proposals.

A scathing attack on the nominations committee proposal was mounted by FFV director Nick Monteleone who wrote a letter to zone representatives and standing committee chairpeople.

That letter called into question the need for a nominations committee and concluded with a blunt assessment of the motives behind the proposal.

Monteleone's letter stated, in part: "This is not about board succession. It is about setting up a nomination committee of faceless people. It is about reducing members' rights. It is about controlling the outcome of the next and future elections."

It seems that his letter had the desired effect as a 10 December letter from Dunkerley to FFV members acknowledged that both proposals failed to gain majority support.

Of the company structure proposal, Dunkerley wrote: "In effect this means that no proposed changes to the Constitution regarding transitioning to a Company will be put at this year's AGM."

The controversial nominations committee proposal came under the heading of director succession planning and that too was given the cold shoulder by members.

"Based on member feedback regarding the introduction of a proposed Nominations Committee, a motion was passed that the FFV Board will not be implementing a Nominations Committee for the impending Board Elections."

The rebuff for Dunkerley is ill-timed as the position of FFV president is up for grabs at the forthcoming elections. They have to be held within five months of the end of FFV's financial year on 31 October.

That gives Dunkerley until the end of March 2011 to face members to try and gain another term. He is required to give 21 days' notice of the election.

The 23 November meeting has been likened to "a mini presidential election" by one voting member and GW has been told that the nominations committee proposal was scuppered by a vote of 19–2.

So far attempts to extradite Koutropoulos to Level 3, 436 St Kilda Road have proved fruitless. There are strong rumours that he is holed up in the storage area of an obscure Greek-backed football club in Clayton.

FFV zone representatives, standing committee chairpeople, referees and volunteer office staff are understood to be planning a line search of the grounds and surrounds of all football clubs in that area.

The current Champions League season has been put on hold until Koutropoulos is found.

The end of an era

Andrew Dettre is a pioneer of the Australian soccer press and his contribution to our sport has been immense.
Back in 1987 Dettre filed his final column for what was to be the last issue of 'Soccer Action' but Len Shaw, then managing editor of Syme Magazines (formerly Newspress) suddenly closed down the weekly tabloid denying editorial staff the opportunity to thank readers and advertisers who had supported it for 11 years.
Almost 25 years later, GOAL! Weekly takes great pleasure in publishing Dettre's farewell to 'Soccer Action' …

IT'S with almost unspeakable sadness that I begin to write this valedictory to a fine newspaper solely devoted to the affairs of soccer.
An era of professionalism will end today, with the last issue of 'Soccer Action', an era which really began in 1958 with the appearance of 'Soccer World'.
For almost 20 years, from 1962 to 1982, I was actively associated with 'Soccer World' – all but three years as its editor.
Then, in 1982, I had to make the painful decision to close it down, not for commercial but personal reasons.
And now this. 'Soccer Action' is no more.
I wonder how many people in soccer will realise just what a vacuum will be left behind when the last issue, this one, is printed, distributed, bought, read and then filed away or discarded.
For the first time since 1958, Australia will be without a professionally written, edited and published soccer paper.
And that's pretty sad.
To make it worse, it's happening just when the NSL and ASF are once again floating on Cloud Nine in the belief that their $500,000 promotion will bring about the long-awaited miracle.
And while they are splurging this half a million – giving it to TV stations and publications which (a) don't need it and (b) are openly anti-soccer – a fine soccer newspaper has to be closed down for economic reasons.
I have always felt that the disappearance of a soccer publication – even very amateurish ones – is a blow to the game. Let alone a professional journal like this one.
Any sport needs its own specialised press partly to promote it and partly to serve as a watchdog of its administrations.
As retired politician Don Chipp once said: "To keep the bastards honest." Not an easy task in any sport, or in politics.
Official publications always fall short of the mark: by their very nature they have to be meek, laudatory, servile. In fact, sycophantic.
It's the independent press that has credibility – even if officialdom often hates it. Or perhaps because of it.
For some time I have been fearing for the future of soccer in this country at the current semi-professional level.
Recent signals appear to make my fears well founded.
Two weeks ago Australia's most successful soccer outfit ever, Sydney City, decided to withdraw, for financial reasons, from the NSL; now it's this fine newspaper that packs it in for similar reasons.
Oh, I know soccer won't disappear; nothing does in nature. Things merely change place or shape.
The same is happening with soccer which will shrink even further to serve a very narrow ethnic market at NSL level, with the appropriate publications in the supporting role.
One small consolation is that we all know the date of death: today.
This is something I didn't know about 'Soccer World' when I ceased to publish it as a weekly in 1981 and then as a monthly in 1982, thus missing our own obituaries.
I am grateful for having had the opportunity, since 1983, of writing for two excellent editors, in Laurie Schwab and Craig MacKenzie, sharing the pages with many first-class colleagues.
I wish them all every success in their professional careers.
As for myself, I think I will switch to becoming a mere observer of the passing parade.
Soccer, as I said, will survive. But for me it won't be the same.

The great Andrew Dettre with one of his grandsons, Louis Dettre.

SOCCER ACTION
JUGOSLOVENSKA SCENA: 14
VIVA ITALIA: 14
ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΑ ΝΕΑ ΣΕΛΙΣ: 14
Herd to face St George
BUFFALO
FOR THE BEST BALLS AT THE BEST PRICES
THE ONLY BALLS APPROVED BY THE VICTORIAN SOCCER FEDERATION
SPORTS BALLS
Train
Notice to all Clubs — BUY DIRECT AND SAVE!

Last season for Tony Henderson?
Tony Henderson — former Socceroo captain.
Andrew Dettre
Marconi wants Zinni
CRAIG MacKENZIE

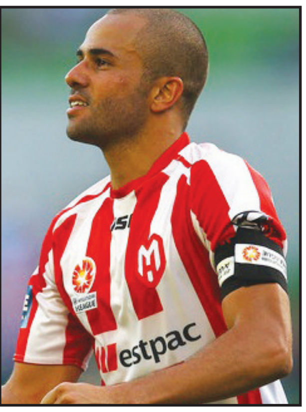
Left: The front cover of the very last edition of '*Soccer Action*' which made it to press. It is dated Thursday 9 April 1987.

Right: A typical Andrew Dettre column in 'Soccer Action'.

Photos: Roy Hay

GW'S A-League Team of the Season

COMPILED BY STEVEN TALEVSKI



Fred

Patrick Zwaanswijk

GK: Mathew Ryan – The Central Coast number one has had an outstanding season between the sticks.
The youngster kept eight clean sheets in 21 games for the Mariners as he helped his side win the Premiers Plate.
His club performances did not go unnoticed as he was selected as first choice goalkeeper for the Olyroos and was in the Socceroos squad for the World Cup qualifier against Saudi Arabia in February.

RB: Manny Muscat – The Maltese international was an important figure in the Phoenix defence this season where he played in 25 out of 27 games.
Muscat played in all seven clean sheets for the Phoenix.
The right back also scored his first goal in the A-League when he handed his side the one nil victory over Newcastle in the week 15.

CB: Patrick Zwaanswijk – The 37 year old Dutchman was the most selected player Goal! Weekly's team of the week with nine appearances.
The veteran defender had a fantastic year partnering Mariners captain Alex Wilkinson in the leagues' best defence with the side only conceding 24 goals.
Zwaanswijk was also an asset in attack for the Mariners with six goals for the Premiers.

CB: Andrew Durante – One of two Phoenix players in the team of the season, Durante was an inspirational captain for the side from Wellington.
Durante used his strength, skill and leadership to take Wellington marching into the finals for the third straight season.

LB: Joshua Rose – Arguably the league's best left back, Rose was once again a key part of the A-League's best defence.
Rose played all 27 games for the Mariners.
His solid defensive work and great attacking runs justifies his position in Goal! Weekly's team of the season.

CDM: Erik Paartalu – Paartalu was once against the league's most consistent player to sit in front of a back four.
Paartalu's passing has won many plaudits but his defensive work should not be underestimated as his presence in front of Brisbane's centre of defence gave attackers major headaches this season.

RCM: Fred – He may have only played 18 games this season but the Brazilian was the Hearts most important player this season.
Fred played in all of Hearts nine wins, with the side only picking up four points in the nine games he missed.
Fred's leadership, control of the midfield and pivotal passing has been a highlight to watch this season.

LCM: Michael McGlinchey – McGlinchey is one of four Central Coast players in Goal! Weekly's team of the season.
McGlinchey led the A-League with assists this season creating eight goals, two more than any other player in the league.

RW: Mate Dugandzic – The Melbourne Heart youngster has had a breakout season since arriving from cross town rivals Melbourne Victory.
Dugandzic's skill, speed, passing and shooting has led him to be arguably the league's best attacking wide player.
Dugandzic had scored six goals this season and has matched it with six assists.

ST: Besart Berisha – He may be one of the league's most controversial players but he is also this season's best striker.
With an enormous tally 18 goals this season; Berisha is the league's top goal scorer.
Berisha's attacking talent is one of the best seen in the A-League and one of the hardest to defend.

LW: Harry Kewell – Melbourne Victory began the season with high hopes but ultimately ended in failure, however Australia's golden boy has had a great first season in the A-League.
Kewell had 73 attempts on goal this season, the most of any player in the league this season.
Kewell's eight goals and four assists led him to be one of the Victory's only shining lights this season.

Honourable mentions
GK: *Clint Bolton & Ante Covic.*

DEF: *Aziz Behich, Bas van den Brink, Michael Marrone, Ben Sigmund, & Alex Wilkinson.*

MID: *Nick Carle, Brett Emerton, Carlos Hernandez, Mitch Nichols & Dario Vidosic.*

ATT: *Jeremy Brockie, Paul Ifill, Ben Halloran, Shane Smeltz & Archie Thompson.*

Harry Kewell

Erik Paartalu

Couch Potato

* ALL TIMES ARE AEDT

SBS

SBS ONE

Sunday April 1st
10:30 AM UEFA Europa League Highlights
11:00 AM Les Murray's Football Feature
12:00 PM UEFA Champions League Magazine Program

Monday April 2nd
04:30 PM FIFA Futbol Mundial
11:05 PM The World Game

Wednesday April 4th
04:30 AM UEFA Champions League - Quarter-final (2nd Leg)
06:45 AM UEFA Champions League - Quarter-final (2nd Leg)

Thursday April 5th
04:30 AM UEFA Champions League - Quarter-final (2nd Leg)
06:45 AM UEFA Champions League - Quarter-final (2nd Leg)

Thursday April 5th
11:05 PM UEFA Champions League Hour

Friday April 6th
04:45 AM UEFA Europa League - Quarter-final (2nd Leg)
07:00 AM UEFA Europa League - Quarter-final (2nd Leg)

one

Saturday 31st March
05:30 am FA Cup Classics Arsenal V Bolton Wanderers 4th Round Replay 93/94

Sunday 1st April
03:00 am Magic Of The FA Cup Greatest Goals
04:00 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights

Monday 02nd April
09:30 am Serie A Napoli V Juventus
11:30 am The Serie A Highlights Show

Tuesday 03rd April
02:30 am The Serie A Highlights Show
03:00 am Arsenal TV Queens Park Rangers V Arsenal
06:00 am Bundesliga Weekly
07:00 am Serie A Milan V Catania

Wednesday 04th April
02:00 am Magic Of The FA Cup Newcastle United - Greatest Players
03:00 am Liverpool TV Newcastle V Liverpool
06:00 am The Serie A Highlights Show

Thursday 05th April
02:00 am Bundesliga Nuremberg V Bayern Munich
04:00 am Bundesliga Weekly Highlights
07:30 am Liverpool TV Newcastle V Liverpool

SETANTA SPORTS

Saturday 31-Mar
Bundesliga Dortmund v Stuttgart 5:25am LIVE
Blue Square Premier Luton v York 10:15am 1st Airing
Scottish Premier League Motherwell v Rangers 9:55pm LIVE

Sunday 1-Apr
Bundesliga Hertha Berlin v Wolfsburg 2:25am LIVE
Ligue 1 Nancy v PSG 6:30am 1st Airing
Eredivisie Twnete v Roda 8:15am 1st Airing
Ligue 1 Marseille v Montpellier 11:45am 1st Airing
Scottish Premier League Celtic v St Johnstone 9:40pm LIVE
Scottish Premier League Inverness v Hibernian 11:55pm LIVE

Monday 2-Apr
Bundesliga Hannover v Monchengladbach 2:30am 1st Airing
Ligue 1 Rennes v Lyon 4:45am LIVE
Primera Division Teams TBC 8:00am LIVE
Eredivisie Ajax v Heracles 10:15am 1st Airing
Bundesliga Hoffenheim v Schalke 12:00pm 1st Airing
Ligue 1 Lille v Toulouse 1:45pm 1st Airing
Eredivisie Vitesse v AZ 3:30pm 1st Airing
Primera Division Teams TBC 5:15pm 1st Airing

Thursday 5-Apr
Copa Libertadores 2nd Stage Internacional v Santos 10:45am LIVE

Saturday 7-Apr
Scottish Premier League Kilmarnock v Celtic 8:55pm LIVE

Sunday 8-Apr
Ligue 1 Round 31 Lyon v Auxerre 4:45am LIVE

FOX SPORTS

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE LIVE
Times listed are 7 minutes prior to kick-offs.

Week 34
Sun Apr 1 Man City v Sunderland 12.53 am Fox 1
Sun Apr 1 Aston Villa v Chelsea 12.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Apr 1 QPR v Arsenal 12.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Apr 1 Wigan v Stoke 12.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Apr 1 Wolves v Bolton 12.53 am Viewers Choice
Sun Apr 1 Everton v West Brom 4.30 am DELAY
Sun Apr 1 Fulham v Norwich 6.00 am DELAY
Sun Apr 1 Newcastle v Liverpool 10.23 pm Fox 3
Mon Apr 2 Tottenham v Swansea 12.53 am Fox 1
Tue Apr 3 Blackburn v Man Utd 4.53 am Fox 1

ENGLISH FOOTBAL LEAGUE
Sat Mar 31 L1: Sheffield Wednesday v Preston 10.30 pm Fox 1
Sun Apr 1 Blackpool v Southampton 2.00 am Fox 1

A-LEAGUE LIVE
Fri Mar 30 Week 1: TBA v TBA 8.00 pm Fox 1
Sat Mar 31 Week 1: TBA v TBA 5.00 pm Fox 1
Sun Apr 1 Week 1: TBA v TBA 7.00 pm Fox 1

ASIAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
Tue Apr 3 Mariners v Seongnam 7.00 pm Fox 1
Tue Apr 3 Pohang v Adelaide U 9.00 pm Fox 1

FOX SPORTS FC
Every Tuesday 8.30 pm

BOO'S WORLD

With Mark Boric

Guess Who?

Spent a bit of time last week reading up on 1960's garage band one hit wonders ? and the Mysterians, of 96 Tears fame.

Urban legend seems to have it that their lead singer, born Rudy Martinez, has legally changed his name to the question mark symbol and one person claims to have seen this borne out on his driver's licence. What does this have to do with football, in the state of Victoria, in the year of Our Lord 2012 you may well ask? I think it is time a club which has changed it's name more than once in recent times adopts the ? symbol as their own. ? Zebras. The ? covers all bases. The ? can pay tribute to all the suburbs names that have sat in that place, whilst offering all others a hope that they may one day be home to the club. It would be a bold move, but an exciting one in my opinion. ? Zebras is a name that is inclusive, with an air of mystery, and an element of surprise. People around the world will be intrigued, it gets one thinking. The time has come gentlemen, make it happen.

VPL on the Menu

Anyone catch The Age's VPL season preview in the weekend paper? Some of Matt Preston's finest work. Makes you wonder if Gus and Chatz's best chance of reaching the big time is teaming up and going on My Kitchen Rules.

A Plate Too Bare

Bit disappointing that the new A-League Premiers, the mighty Central Coast Mariners, weren't presented with the Premier's Plate after their game in Wellington on Sunday. It goes against FFA policy to present the Plate winners with the trophy at an away game, which raises the question as to why? Cost? Not prepared to have a second plate on standby when it may be required at an uncertain venue? Could they not have given Jaimee Rodgers at TAB Sportsbet a call to find out what the punters thought was the most likely outcome?
She has her finger on the pulse, I'm sure. Someone should tell Mr Lowy that Clive Palmer would have a few spare Premier's Plates handy, he's probably paid for most of Campbell Newman's.

Luckily a Greek team didn't win the Premier's Plate otherwise all hell (and more plates) would have broken loose....

Heart Attacks

Well done to Melbourne Heart on making the finals for the first time. And well done to Melbourne Victory, for when they appoint Jim Magilton for next season and make Craig Foster's head explode like the guy at the KKK Rally in Dave Chappelle's Black White Supremacist sketch.

BYO Self Service

With Goal! Weekly unfortunately unable to continue through the winter it's lucky that those of an age to whom the internet is irrelevant will still be able to catch up on the VPL results in the Herald-Sun and The Age. Or will they? No, they wont. No, lower league football coverage in the mainstream papers is a thing of the past. In old days the old VSF had to push hard to get the results in, but more often than not it happened. WIth the advent of the internet, they were able to send all the media contacts an email on a Sunday night containing the results, scorers and tables of all the Men's Seniors and Reserves leagues. As a result, the senior results, scorers and tables appeared in the papers every week. The reason they don't any more is because the emails stopped. If the papers want the data, they can get it off the FFV website. Now seeing as that is a bit of work over all the leagues, that is why it no longer happens. So as great as the FFV website is in preaching to the internet-savvy converted, it still comes up short compared to the dark old days.

KATSA'S KORNER

With George Katsamboukas

The last Round of the A-League has concluded with the Top 6 Finalised, and as an Extra Ball, Graham "Goal A Game Arnie" Arnold's Central Coast Mariners finished in Top Spot and took out The Premiers Plate.

Only problem was that there was no Premiers Plate to present in Sunny Wellington at the conclusion of the Match, something that Arnold was not too pleased about.

The winner was going to be either Central Coast or Brisbane depending on results, so it was logistically possible to have the Premiers Plate at both Venues.

One consolation to Arnold is that he did take out the Coach of the Year Award, however, he would still be having sleepless nights after the Central Coast Mariners performed the Choke of all Chokes in last Year's Grand Final against the Brisbane Roar.

Obviously he is looking to wipe out that Bad Memory by taking out this Years Title.

Over to the Melbourne Victory we go, and at time of Writing, still no confirmation as whether Jim Magilton will be the el supremo there next Season.

A whisper that I did hear is that the Victory Board may have their sites set on a current Coach who has won both A-League and NSL Titles, currently working in a State that is renowned for its fine weather, and the Team that he currently Coaches play in Orange Strips. Another whisper was that Magilton will get the nod.

Time will tell…

The Victory Marketing Machine ended up letting the cat out of the bag a wee bit early on Tuesday when Rodrigo Vargas' player profile on their website had a very interesting caption next to his photo – it read 'Do Not Distribute' Kinda sorta of reminds you of stories of old when coaches found out they'd been sacked after turning on the tube and reading the news on Tele-text.

It seems that the A-League has more Lobby Groups than one can find in Canberra, home of our Fine Government.
Hot on the heels of Clive Palmers newly formed Football Australia, the A-League Club Owners are set to form their own Lobby Group and are due to meet to thrash out their concerns with the A-League governance and in particular, the FFA.
Over to the Victorian Premier League we go where newcomers Southern Stars and Moreland Zebras suffered a very Sad End in their first Game, both losing 4-0 to Dandenong Thunder and South Melbourne, respectively.

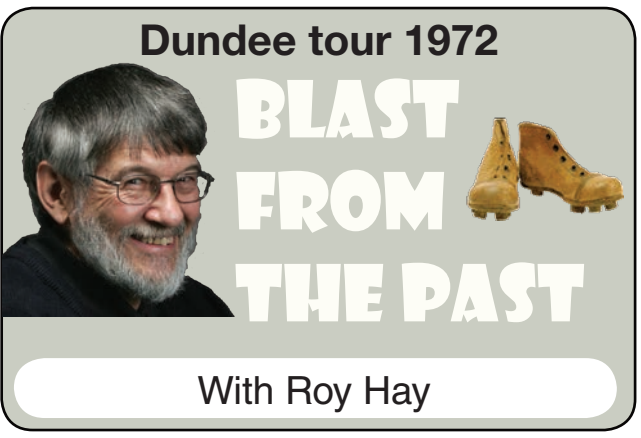
I was somewhat surprised that South were not wearing their traditional Blue and White Strips, rather they were playing in Grey, question is, will this be the new Colors fro 2012?

Until Next Week

This is Katsa – Just as you have known him

Follow me on Twitter @katsa62

Dundee tour 1972



With Roy Hay

Dundee Down Under

It is almost thirty years since Scottish club Dundee came on tour to Australia in May 1972. Though they only finished fifth in the Scottish First Division that year, they had reached the semi-final of the European Cup in in 1963 and were Scottish champions in 1962. In 1967-68 they were in the semi-final of the Inter-City Fairs Cup which later evolved into the UEFA Cup. The team Dundee brought to Australia had some top class players and they were too strong for their local opposition, winning all six games and scoring 46 goals and only conceding six.

The Dundee squad included Mike Hewitt in goals, Bobby Wilson, Dave Johnston, Ian Phillip, Bob Robinson, Gordon Stewart, Doug Houston, Jimmy Wilson, John Duncan, Gordon Wallace, Jocky Scott, Duncan Lambie, Iain Scott, Ian Anderson, Tom Allen and J Gray. Jocky Scott was a full Scottish international, while Gordon Wallace was the country's player of the year in 1968 and the leading goalscorer. Bobby Wilson and Iain Phillip had Scottish League honours and Mike Hewitt and Duncan Lambie were Under-23 caps.

Dundee had a big win over Auckland in New Zealand before arriving here. The Australian leg of the tour began with a match against Victoria at Olympic Park on Sunday 14 May, which Dundee won by four goals to two. Duncan Lambie and Gordon Wallace put Dundee two up in the first half, but Victoria came bouncing back to equalise through Mirko Rujevic and Branko Buljevic. Dundee realised it had a game on its hands and Doug Houston restored the lead in 67 minutes. Bob Robinson scored in the second last minute as Victoria tried to chase another equaliser.

On 17 May, Dundee travelled to Adelaide to take on a full strength Australian team with Roger Romanowicz in goals, George Harris, Peter Wilson, John Watkiss, Bobby Hogg, Jim Rooney, Jim Mackay, Ray Baartz, Atti Abonyi, Adrian Alston and Billy Vojtek. Dundee scored through winger Jimmy Wilson after only three minutes, when Romanowicz punched his corner kick into his own net in trying to clear. In the 18th minute the keeper came out to collect a cross-shot but only succeeded in diverting into the path of Jocky Scott who tapped it home. Noddy Alston pulled a goal back for Australia in 27 minutes. Jimmy Rooney flicked on a corner from Billy Vojtek and Alston rose above the defence to head home. The game was refereed by Don Campbell, who remembers Roger Romanowicz playing a great game pulling off a number of fine saves, but the early errors sank the Australians. Bobby Hogg made his debut at left back and was outstanding, according to Laurie Schwab. The program for the game was one of the earliest appearances of the Socceroo logo as a promotional device for the successful 1974 World Cup qualification campaign which was about to get under way.

The next match was against an ACT select in Canberra which the Scots won in a canter by nine goals to one on Saturday 20 May. This was followed by whitewash of Queensland in Brisbane on the Sunday by nine goals to nil. Jocky Scott scored a hat-trick and Jimmy Wilson two.

Heading south Dundee had a walk in the park against a Northern Rivers select in Lismore running in sixteen goals to one on 24 May. G Bryant scored the local team's only goal. This time Jocky Scott got 5 goals, Gray three and John Duncan two.

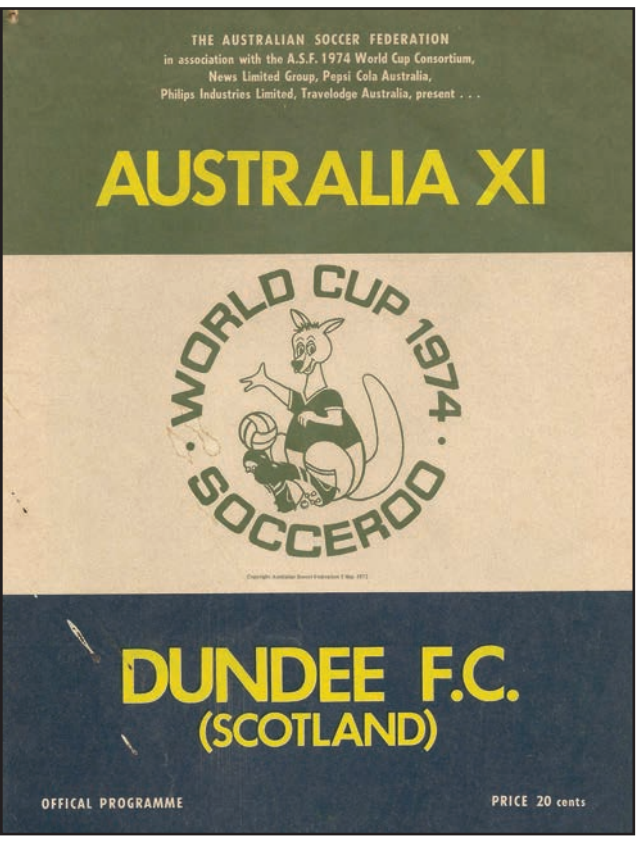
For the final match of the tour New South Wales fielded a strong team against the tourists at the Sydney Sportsground on 28 May but Dundee won comfortably by six goals to one. Ernie Campbell scored the home team's goal. The NSW line up was: David McQuire, George Harris, Bobby Hogg, John Watkiss, Peter Wilson, Drew Dunlop, Attila Abonyi (Terry Butler 61'), Jimmy Rooney, Ray Baartz, Adrian Alston (Bill Rogers 75'), Ernie Campbell.

I am indebted to Don Campbell for the copy of the 1972 match program and information about the Dundee game in Adelaide.

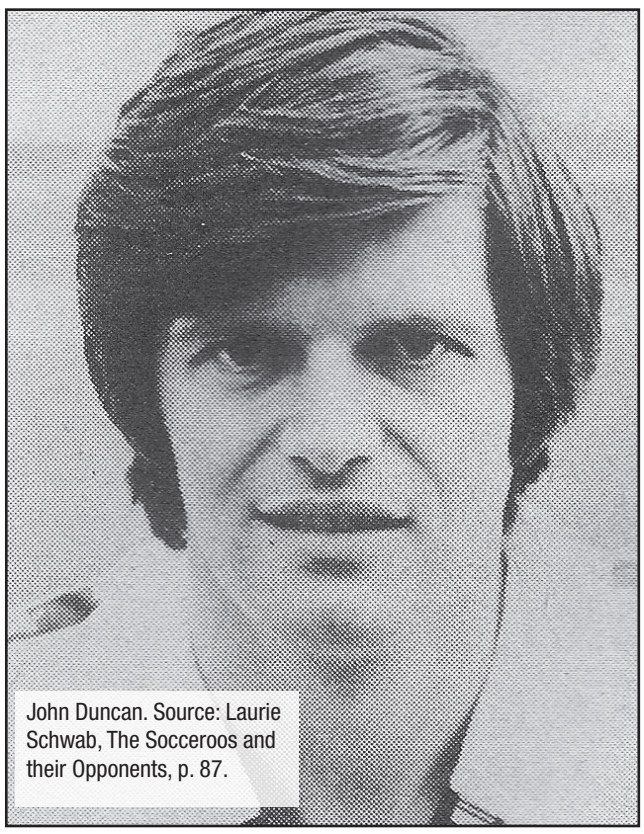
Dundee prior to 1972 tour. Source: ASF, Australia XI v Dundee, match program, p. 3.

BACK ROW (Left to Right): R. Wilson, I. Phillip, M. Hewitt, Donaldson (now Falkirk), G. Stewart, D. Johnston, McLean. (Coach—now Manager Dundee United).
CENTRE ROW (Left to Right): J. W. Prentice (ex-Manager—now in Canada), R. Robinson, I. Scott, J. Steele (now with Southampton), R. Selway, D. Lambie, M. Friel (ex Physiotherapist).
FRONT ROW (Left to Right): A. Bryce (now Falkirk), J. Duncan, A. Kinninmonth, D. Houston, G. Wall
J. Scott, J. Wilson.

Jocky Scott (left) and Gordon Wallace of Dundee. Source: Hugh Taylor, The Scottish Football Book, no. 21, p. 63.



Australia v Dundee. Source: ASF, Australia XI v Dundee, match program, cover.



John Duncan. Source: Laurie Schwab, The Socceroos and their Opponents, p. 87.

Dundee tour summary

14-May-72	Victoria	2	Dundee	4	Olympic Park
17-May-72	Australia	1	Dundee	2	Adelaide
20-May-72	ACT	1	Dundee	9	Canberra
21-May-72	Queensland	0	Dundee	9	Brisbane
24-May-72	Northern Rivers	1	Dundee	16	Lismore
28-May-72	NSW	1	Dundee	6	Sydney Sportsground

State League Division One season kicks off!

By Donald Sutherland

Dandenong City SC v. St. Albans Saints SC

It's a David v. Goliath match up when newly promoted Dandenong City take on newly relegated St. Albans Saints in the opening round of State League One.

It's also the rematch of the 2012 CroCup Final where the underdogs, Dandenong, come out victorious 1-0. St Albans will be looking for instant promotion back to the VPL and will look towards Amadu Karoma to lead the way. The ex-Melbourne Knights youngster is a highly rated attacking midfielder, looking to play first team football after being benched when management changed hands at the Knights. The Saints have had a relatively good preseason including a 5-3 win over Melbourne Victory Youth, where Karoma scored.

Dandenong City 2012 Squad: *Julien Dos Santos, Josip Klarica, Koray Suat, Stipo Andrijasevic, Tomi Razov, Adam Fadljevic, Vasilios Natsioulas, Ivan Klarica, Julius Adeosun, Ljuban Palinic, Vlado Juric, Ramsey Nasser, Vito Pirozzi, Dario Matkovic, Daniel Black, Simon Webster, Wayne Gordon, Johnny Crivelli, Philip Ajao, John Carroll, Steven Ancevski, Gregor Gorican*

St. Albans Saints 2012 Squad: *1 Damir Salcin , 2 Tristen Romein, 3 Marko Raspudic, 5 Filip Vulic, 6 Amadu Karoma, 7 Goran Jozelic, 8 Goran Kuna, 9 Marko Kuna, 10 Hrvoje Matkovic, 11 Daniel Sweeney, 12 Peter Konjevic, 13 Dario Lasic, 14 Joshua Brekalo, 15 Konrad Dobraszkiewicz, 16 Marko Vidakovic, 17 Ashley Lymn, 18 Ali Bessalem, 20 Ivan Lijovic, 21 Stefan Jasensek, 22 Metin Alibeyi*

Altona Magic v. Nth Geelong

It's been two years since Altona Magic were a regular in the premier Victorian football league, and after a season of mediocrity and point deduction in 2011, where the club finished 5th, the Magic faithful will expect more from their club. They've had a good preseason albeit against inferior opponents although they did come out victorious against fellow State League One side, Sunshine George Cross, in a hard fought game which finished 1-0. Kovacevic, Antic, Cetkin, Koceski, all ex-VPL players, will be key to Magic's success, along with new signings Zoran Vukas and Stefaan Sardelic Since being promoted to State League One back in 2010, the Warriors have achieved mediocrity, and aimed to avoid relegation, finishing 6th in 2011 and 8th in 2010. North Geelong have entered 2012 with a largely unchanged squad, and will aim to avoid relegation in 2012 again.

Altona Magic 2012 Squad: *Stefaan Sardelic GK, Chris Ailakis GK, Eddie Cetkin, John Stojcevski. Aleksandar Koltovski, Neven Antic, Zoran Vukas, George Papadopoulos, Justin Nikolovski, Denis Ukalovski, Rini Muriqi, Kliment Dimitrieski, Deni Tintor, Dime Trajceski, Lupce Koceski, Nick Srbinovski, Stevce Dimcevski, Juso Julardzija, Steve Mladenoski, Benji Vahid, Robert Naumoski, Sime Kovacevic (c), Steven Cudrig*

North Geelong Warriors 2012 Squad: *Anderson Michael, Batur Milan, Boyar Michael, Cook Nathan, D'Antino Aaron - Captain, Ferguson Callum, Hanns Justin, Kurul Reha, Lewis Darren, Long Nathan, Mitrovic Stipan, Morell Damien, Ortis Daniel, Paleka Alan, Paleka Mark, Patti John, Roksa Danijel, Townley Matt, Trupkovic Mijo, Zadworny Robert - Vice Captain, Zilic Daniel.*

Port Melbourne v. Werribee City

Port Melbourne were extremely unlucky not to have been promoted last season, and will try to start again by starting against Werribee City at home.

The Sharks finished on the same points as both 1st (Moreland Zebras) and 2nd (Southern Stars) and only missed on promotion on goal difference. It's a different story for City though, who will attempt to avoid relegation after being promoted from State League Two (North-West).

Sharks 2012 Squad: Adam Hrehoresin, Anthony Saric, Martin Mason, Peter Roberts, Felix Rosman, Haris Vrbovac, Dillan Murnae, Eric Vassiliadis, Tim Paton, Chris Reid, Denis Dasoul, Darryl Roach, Nick Kalambokis, Ryan O'Hare, Gill Shane, Tony Ouliaris, Anthony Selemidis, Paul Miller, Brodie Patterson, Melvin Beckett, Alex Khrapko, Sam Brown

Werribee City *Squad not available at time of going to press.*

Western Suburbs v. George Cross

Both Western Suburbs and Sunshine George Cross will look to improve their respective seasons in 2012 after both facing relegation at points throughout 2011.

Western Suburbs are coming into the new season with great off-season form, winning the prestigious Hellenic Cup, beating VPL outfits Heidelburg United 3-1 in the final, and South Melbourne in the semi-final on penalties. You'd think with such form, they should be up there or there abouts come the end of the season. Sunshine George Cross go into season 2012 with new leadership after Tony Ciantar comes in as head coach and Barry Devlin as captain, replacing Con Anthopolous.

Western Suburbs 2012 Squad: *1. Ante Loncaric (gk), 2. Sam Sweeney, 3. George Noulas, 4. Goran Petrovski, 5. Jason Corbett, 6. Elias Tsintzas, 7. Noel Fox, 8. Dale Thompson (c), 9. Joshua Kamasz, 10. James O'Sullivan, 11. Yaw Otuo-Acheampong, 12. Steve Georgakakis, 13. Vasilios Sianidis, 14. Giuliano Di Marco, 15. Daniel Eskander, 16. Kurt Pendelbury, 17. Deng Aguek, 18. Josip Loncaric, 19. Joshua Groenewald, 20. Gregory Lascaris (gk), 21. Simon Kelly, 22. Fabio Diliza, 23. Andrew Kerkulah, 24. Joshua Pugh*

Sunshine George Cross 2012 Squad: *1. Martin John, 2. Heo Wookbum, 4. Barry Devlin (c), 5. Con Anthopoulos, 6. Michael Kelly, 7. Trent Waterson, 8. Leo Shin, 9. Tom Cahill, 10. Andrew Doig, 11. Nicholas Scerri, 12. Habib Fleifel, 14. Ben Cogger, 16. Steve Martin, 17. John Kim, 18. Zeljko Popovic, 20. Sean Grech, 21. Eddie Soares, 22. Chris Xerri, 23. Francois Bationo, 26. Chris Greechan*

Springvale White Eagles v. Whittlesea Rangers

The Keysborough-based Springvale White Eagles are another side eager to return to the top flight of Victorian football in 2012. The club, which has yo-yoed between State League One and VPL in recent years, comes into the new year with two ex-South Melbourne players Joshua Colosimo and George Malliaras joining the club, along with Slaven Vranesevic from Noble Park United. Nenad Pavasovic also returns from a knee injury, and is touted as one of the best defenders in the league. Whittlsea's major signing in the off-season was the capture of Nigerian born Lukmon Anifaloyin. Rangers were able to steal the defender off Fawkner Blues after the club was relegated to State League Two, along with striker Robert Dolevski.

Springvale White Eagles and Whittlesea *squads not available at the time of going to press.*

FC Bulleen Lions v. Pascoe Vale SC

Pascoe Vale enteres 2012 hoping for continued after finishing a respectable 4th in 2011's State League One season, after a few years of mediocrity.

New signing Greg Lombado joins the likes of Adrian Talarico, Liam Flynn and Joseph Youseff as Pascoe Vale's key for success for in 2012. Bulleen Lions go into the new season without Tim Mala who left for Dandenong Thunder, but are bolstered by the signings of former south Melbourne, Clifton hill player and Altona Magic defender Steven Mrkela as well as Dusan Bosjak, Daniel Peluso and Alistair Bray

FC Bulleen Lions *squad not available at the time of going to press*

Pascoe Vale 2012 Squad: *Liam Flynn, Jake Vandermey, Jason Principato, Antoine Thunnel, Codey Larkin, Patrick Brown, Andrew LePage, Cody Sellwood, Matthew Lazaridis, Resit Culculoglu, Zlate Matlijoski, Marco Santili, Luke Bower, Rylan Sadler, Rosario Mancuso, Mark Pistininzi, Frank Serratore, Adrian Talarico, Bale Micovski, Joey Youssef, Steven Tribuzio, Greg Lombardo, Evan Karavitis, Luca Santili*

Sunshine George Cross will be one of the favourites to secure promotion come season's end. PHOTO: DANIEL FLIS

Round One Fixtures

3:00 PM Sat 31/Mar
Dandenong City v St Albans Saints
Frank Holohan Soccer Complex

3:00 PM Sat 31/Mar
Altona Magic v Nth Geelong Warriors
Paisley Park

7:00 PM Sat 31/Mar
Pt Melbourne Sharks v Werribee City
JL Murphy Reserve - SS Anderson Oval

3:00 PM Sun 1/Apr
Western Suburbs v George Cross
Ralph Reserve

3:00 PM Sun 1/Apr
Springvale WE v Whittlesea Ranges
White Eagles Stadium

8:30 PM Mon 2/Apr
FC Bulleen Lions v Pascoe Vale
Veneto Club - David Barro Stadium

State & Provi Round 1 Fixtures

All matches to be played on Sat 31st March with 3pm KO unless otherwise stated.

State NW 2
Brunswick City v Moreland City SC
Dunstan Reserve
Keilor Park v Altona East Phoenix SC
Keilor Park Recreation Reserve
Altona City v Fawkner Blues FC
Kim Reserve
La Trobe University v Banyule City SC
Latrobe Uni Lower Playing Field
FC Clifton Hill v Ballarat Red Devils SC
Quarries Park
Westgate v Preston Lions FC
Ardeer Reserve 7:00 PM Sat 31/Mar

State SE 2
Casey Comets v Langwarrin SC
Comets Stadium
Mornington SC v Diamond Valley United SC
Dallas Brooks Park
Kingston City v Malvern City FC
The Grange Reserve
South Springvale v Noble Park United FC
Warner Reserve
Morwell Pegasus v Doncaster Rovers SC
Ronald Reserve 6:30 PM Sat 31/Mar
Box Hill United v Eastern Lions SC
Wembly Park 7:00 PM Sat 31/Mar

State NW 3
Geelong SC v Yarraville FC
Stead Park 8:30 PM Fri 30/Mar
Cairnlea v Avondale Heights SC
Cairnlea Park
Williamstown v Whittlesea United SC
JT Gray Reserve
Sydenham Park v Sporting Whittlesea FC
Keilor Lodge Reserve
Sunbury United v Melbourne University
Langama Park
North Sunshine Eagles v Hume United FC
Larissa Reserve

State SE 3
Knox City v Springvale City SC
Knox Regional Football Cnt 8:30 PM Fri 30/Mar
Waverley Wanderers v Beaumaris SC
Carlson Avenue Reserve
Peninsula Strikers v Berwick City SC
Centenary Park
Nunawading City v Heatherton United
Mahoneys Reserve
Doveton v Old Scotch SC
Waratah Reserve
Fitzroy City v North Caulfield
Fairfield Park 3:00 PM Sun 1/Apr

Provi NW 1
Lalor United v Corio SC
HR Uren Reserve
Westvale v Essendon United FC
McKechnie Reserve
Moreland United v South Yarra SC
Moomba Park
Geelong Rangers v Surf Coast
Myers Reserve
Maribyrnong Greens v Northern Falcons SC
Skinner Reserve
FC Strathmore v North City Lions SC
Strathnaver Reserve -

Provi SE 1
Croydon City Arrows v Old Camberwell Gram
Dorset Recreation Reserve 8:30 PM Fri 30/Mar
Monbulk Rangers v Monash University
Monbulk Recreation Reserve 8:30 PM Fri 30/Mar
Frankston Pines v Old Melburnians SC
Monterey Reserve 8:30 PM Fri 30/Mar
Warragul United v Riversdale SC
Baxter Park (Warragul)
Mooroolbark v Sandringham SC
Esther Park Reserve
Hampton Park Utd Sparrows v Brandon Park
KM Reedy Reserve -

Provi NW 2
Bell Park v Essendon Royals SC
Bell Park Sports Club
Brunswick Zebras v Laverton Park SC
Clifton Park
Elwood City v Epping City SC
Elwood Park
Northern Roosters v Upfield SC
Gibb Reserve
Hoppers Crossing v Plenty Valley Lions FC
Grange Reserve
Western Eagles v West Preston SC
Polish Sports & Recreation Complex

Provi SE 2
Baxter v Glen Waverley SC
Baxter Park
White Star Dandenong v Eltham Redbacks
Greaves Reserve (Alan Carter Pavilion)
Rowville Eagles v Noble Park SC
Park Ridge Reserve
Brighton v University of Melbourne
State Football Centre - Pitch 2 (S)
Whitehorse United v Ringwood City FC
Terrara Park
Old Trinity Gram v Old Brighton Gram
Trinity Sports Ground

Provi NW 3
Balmoral v Melbourne City FC
Balmoral Park
Fawkner v Watsonia Heights SC
CB Smith Reserve (S)
Heidelberg Stars v Brimbank Stallions FC
Cartledge Reserve
Bundoora United v Moreland Wolves SC
Hillsview Recreation Reserve
Melton Phoenix v Melbourne Tornado SC
MacPherson Park
Darebin United v Meadow Park SC
Mayer Park

Provi SE 3
Baxter v Glen Waverley SC
Baxter Park
White Star Dandenong v Eltham Redbacks
Greaves Reserve (Alan Carter Pavilion)
Rowville Eagles v Noble Park SC
Park Ridge Reserve
Brighton v University of Melbourne
State Football Centre - Pitch 2 (S)
Whitehorse United v Ringwood City FC
Terrara Park
Old Trinity Gramm v Old Brighton Gramm
Trinity Sports Ground

Vic Cup

By Donald Sutherland

Victoria's knockout competition progressed into the latter stages of the zonal playoffs with only 4 clubs outside the State Leagues still remaining.

The cup upsets were at a minimum this week with Provisional League 1 outfit, Riversdale Soccer Club participating in the only major surprise.

Riversdale travelled away from Frog Hollow Reserve to a neutral venue and defeated Doncaster Rovers 2-1, a side who play two leagues above.

Nunawading City also travelled away to return the happier with a 2-1 victory over Old Camberwell Grammarians at Olympic Park.

Ballarat Red Devils continued their red-hot form by thumping neighbours Ballarat North United 10-1 at Trekardo Park. The Red Devils have now scored a staggering 23 goals in only three games albeit against inferior opponents.

Fellow State League Two side Caulfield Grammarians were equally impressive by disposing of Metro League club, Kingston City, 8-0 at home, while Seaford United had their cup run ended by Berwick City in humiliating circumstances, with the away team leaving victorious 6-0.

Coming from their victory in the local Moreland Derby, Moreland City continued to impress by defeating FC Strathmore 7-1. Hoppers Crossing also progressed by the same margin, discarding Altona North 6-0 at Hoppers Crossing's Grange Reserve.

Peninsula Strikers and Heatherton United clashed in a preview of a fixture from the regular State League Three season as the Strikers prevailed 2-1 at Peninsula's Century Park. Mooroolbark and Monbulk Rangers had the same privilege of sparing before the regular season, this time with the away side coming out victorious, winning 5-2.

Sebastopol Vikings, from Ballarat's regional league, had their cup run ended by Geelong Rangers 3-1, who made the tedious hour long trip to Sebastopol to come away with a win.

At the State Football Centre, St. Kilda Soccer Club were knocked out by Malvern City 2-0 and had their fairytale run ended after participating in arguably the upset of the competition when they defeated a side five leagues their superior. At the same venue, Yarraville found it difficult to dispose of Middle Park, who play two league bellow them, but eventually progressed, winning 1-0.

Sandringham City played their inaugural FFV Cup match, after not playing in last year's competition, and lost 2-0 to North Caulfield at neutral venue, The Venato Club.

In the remaining games of the round, Diamond Valley defeated Heidelberg Stars 1-0 at Cartledge Reserve, Eastern Lions progressed beating Brandon Park at home, Keilor Park knocked out Westvale 2-1, and La Trobe Uni and Sunbury United both won with a 2-0 score line over Watsonia Heights and Essendon Royals respectively.

The next round of the FFV State Knockout cup will be announced on their official Facebook page, on 3rd April.

Ryan Moore (Eastern Lions) beats Brandon Park's Ben Kasehagen with a well-timed tackle. PHOTO: JOHN PUNSHON

FFV Cup Results

Old Camb Gram 2 - 1 Nunawading City	Keilor Park 2 - 1 Westvale
Sebastopol Vikings 1 - 3 Geelong Rangers	La Trobe University 2 - 0 Watsonia Heights
Malvern City 2 - 0 St Kilda Soccer Club	Seaford United 0 - 6 Berwick City
Heidelberg Stars 0 - 1 Diamond Valley Utd	Essendon Royals 0 - 2 Sunbury United
Peninsula Strikers 2 - 1 Heatherton United	Caulfield Gramm 0 - 8 Kingston City
Mooroolbark 2 - 5 Monbulk Rangers	Ballarat Red Devils 10 - 1 Ballarat Nth Utd
Brandon Park 1 - 3 Eastern Lions	Moreland City 7 - 1 Strathmore
Riversdale 2 - 1 Doncaster Rovers	Yarraville 1 - 0 Middle Park
Altona North 0 - 6 Hoppers Crossing	North Caulfield Senior 2 - 0 Sandringham

V-LEAGUE PREMIERSHIP

Round Nineteen

THE VICTORIAN HOME OF FUTSAL
FUTSAL OZ, 407 VICTORIA STREET, BRUNSWICK. T: 1300 788 799

Vipers strike down Lions to put one hand on trophy

By Jimmy Soufis

Shavin Adeli looks a broken figure as North Melbourne celebrate their 3rd goal in their top of the table victory.

Mike Sharples (left) looks like he is returning to his best form as he opened the scoring for Brunswick.

Aden Alicevic (left) endured a frustrating night as his Brimbank side threw away another lead after he hit the back of the net 4 times .

Noor Khoshaba had his best night in the V-League scoring 3 times and helping his side to their second victory of the season.

FC Essendon 8-9 FC Richmond

Round 19 was upon us and at the business end of the season every point counts in every clash on the card.

Richmond got off to a flying start grabbing the opening goal through Noor Khashaba and quickly doubling it after some good work from Giuseppe Amonail set up Khashaba again. Taylan Aksoy got his name on the score sheet after another brilliant cut back from Amonail.

Aksoy then cut one back for Khashaba to convert his hat-trick and have bottom placed Richmond 4-0 in front. Essendon manager Liubomir Erakovic taking the field for the first time in a long time opened Essendon's account but it didn't dent the killer bee's day as Ninos Emmanuel toe poked one home to have Richmond leading 5-1 at the break.

Aksoy kept up their joy opening the second half scoring to have his side 6-1 in front and heading for the 3 points. Diego Assaeda pulled one back for his side and started a flow of goals as Anthony Hammer added another. From the restart Hammer pressed Richmond and was rewarded with another goal and the wanderers had 3 within 2 minutes. Juso Julardzija got his first of the night and suddenly they were back in the game.

Aksoy though once again regained the advantage his bees putting away his hat-trick. Hammer completed his hat-trick soon after to have the wanderers back in the game once again, but not for the first time Aksoy put another dent in Essendon grabbing his 4th.

However Essendon did not give up when their marksman Julardzija hit 2 quick goals they were back on level terms for the first time since kick off and with under a minute remaining. With the tie heading for a draw someone needed to stand up and stand up they did when Amonail smashed home the winner Richmond were inconsolable after recording their second win of the season and giving themselves a real chance to stay up while for Essendon the loss is a disappointing one they stay in 6th but only just.

CF Brunswick 3-2 FC Prahran

Second clash on the card saw a struggling Brunswick outfit take on in form Prahran missing key goal scorer Jose Portllio it was always going to be tough for them to score goals.

On Prahran's side it was the same story missing leading goal scorer Maxi Avram through injury it proved to be a low scoring affair. Mike Sharples opened the scoring with a tidy finish before Cameron Holmes equalized just minutes later.

Antonis Apostolakis scored a stunning volley towards the end of the first half to give his side the advantage. With just seconds remaining in the half Ahmed Azzam equalized for Prahran and they believed they could go on in the second half. Halid Avdic got the scoring underway in the second half and it proved to be a goalkeepers half with Michael Chami & Jimmy Brennan pulling off some fantastic saves to deny their respective opposition.

That's how it stayed 3-2 the final score and a huge win for Brunswick which puts them within touching distance of the top 8. As for Prahran it's another season of what might have been they stay in 3rd which unless a horrific slide occurs is where they will finish up the season.

North Melbourne 3-1 Pascoe Vale

Next up El Classico the one everyone had been waiting for North Melbourne vs Pascoe Vale built up as the title decider both sides brought full lists.

Pascoe Vale had brought in Shavin Adelli & Renagi Ingram from interstate while North Melbourne chose to go with their same 11 man line up. Pascoe Vale began the first half stronger creating plenty of chances and keeping possession of the ball for long periods of time. Adeli was shining in the first half and perhaps if not for Christos Apostolakis could have had a goal or two Andre Caro and Joao Da Silva were also looking the goods early for the lions.

The vipers stars were quiet early on and could have been behind if not for their superstar goalkeeper Christos Aposolakis but they went into the break 0-0. The second half got under way and with just 2 minutes played Joao Da Silva riffled a free kick into the top right hand corner of Aposolakis net and the lions lead 1-0.

A viper's free kick was laid off to Jonathan Barrientos to rattle the upright. Shortly after that the vipers were level when Jonathan Barrientos thumped one into the bottom right corner of Cem Bicers net.

From then on the game was even with both sides enjoying plenty of possession before a drastic move from lions manager Paul Vidic as he subbed goalkeeper Cem Bicer for Brenno Polati and sent Andre Caro into goals but a confusion with the substitution cost Pascoe Vale dearly as Gui Costa tapped in to give the vipers a 2-1 lead with Pascoe Vale pushing for the win Adam Cooper cleared the ball from his defense into an open empty lions net which sent the North Melbourne bench into raptures as they put 4 points between themselves and their rivals.

Ashburton FC 5-10 Metropolitan FC

Next up was The Green Machine vs. The Sky Blues. Known to be a free scoring unit Metropolitan was sure they could overcome an understrength Ashburton side.

Alexander Stevanovic opened the scoring for the Sky Blues before Sofiane Soufi hit back for the green machine. Alija Redzepovic who has been very quiet of late got his name on the score sheet to give his side the lead. Abel Bahiru equalized for Ashburton.

Stevanovic got another to his name to put Metropolitan back in front. Alija added his second shortly after as The Sky Blues jumped out to a 4-2 lead early in the first half Dino Redzepovic got in on the act as he got Metropolitan's 5th and his brother Alija rounded out the first half scoring to have them 6-2 in front at half time. Soufi opened the second half scoring to give his side a chance but It was quickly killed off by an Alexander Stevanovic Free kick before Stevanovic grabbed his 4th Minutes later.

Soufi was the only shining light for Ashburton as he completed his hat-trick. Alija added his 4th to put Metro 9-4 ahead with only a few Minutes remaining. Soufi smashed home his 4th of the match to put in a man of the match effort for his side. Jusuf Avdic rounded out the scoring before one last twist saw Soufi's frustration boil over and he received a red card.

The win puts Metro within touching distance of Prahran while Ashburton look in danger of being in the relegation battles.

Brimbank FC 6-6 FC Balwyn

Second last clash of the night saw Brimbank take on Balwyn with both sides in desperate need of the 3 points.

Brimbank opened the scoring and rushed out to a 3-0 lead courtesy of goals from Aden Alicevic. Ivan Zilic pulled one back for the Balwyn boys as they looked to come from behind for the second week in a row trailing 3-1 at half time. Alicevic showed why he is so valuable to the Brimbank line up adding his 4th soon after the break. Zilic got his second and showed why he is almost irreplaceable at Balwyn.

Mark Saric got on the board and gave Balwyn a sniff before Mark Borchett restored the 2 goal advantage. Zilic completed his hat-trick soon after to have Balwyn back within a goal and Tony Imeri poked home with only 4 Minutes remaining to equalize.

Fikret Causevic put Brimbank ahead once again to surely seal the points, but that never say die Balwyn Attitude got them their equalizer through timesman Ivan Zilic. The game finished 6-6 and gave Balwyn a chance to get into the top 4 while for Brimbank it was 2 points lost in their quest for a Futsal Oz Cup birth.

Fitzroy FC 10-2 Mickleham FC

The last clash on the card saw Fitzroy take on lowly Mickleham. Andy Jerez opened the scoring for Fitzroy and Italian born Robert Armellini doubled the advantage minutes later. Simon Pincic got one back for Mickleham before a brilliant 1-2 between Haydar Noor and Lucas Johns had Fitzroy's 3rd.

Ben Gearboc kept the hammers in the game before 2 more scrumptious goals from Armellini sealed his hat-trick and had Fitzroy in the driver's seat. Ante Vasic scored an own goal for Fitzroy to have them 6-2 ahead. Noor got his second before cutting one back for Johns to have 2 in a minute. A brilliant passing move between Jerez and Richie Ferguson had them 9-2 ahead before Ben Gearboc Rifled in an own goal to round out the scoring. The win keeps Fitzroy in the hunt for Futsal Oz Cup Action while the loss could prove costly for Mickleham as they stay in 11th.

V-League Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 North Melbourne FC	19	18	0	1	122	49	73	54
2 Pascoe Vale FC	19	16	2	1	132	50	82	50
3 FC Prahran	19	13	2	4	125	68	57	41
4 Metropolitan FC	19	10	2	7	148	107	41	32
5 FC Balwyn	18	9	1	8	93	93	0	28
6 FC Essendon	19	8	1	10	116	123	-7	25
7 Ashburton FC	19	7	3	9	111	112	-1	24
8 Fitzroy FC	19	7	1	11	84	107	-23	22
9 CF Brunswick	19	6	1	12	85	109	-24	19
10 Brimbank FC	19	4	4	11	75	106	-31	16
11 Mickleham FC	19	3	1	15	72	162	-90	10
12 FC Richmond	18	2	2	14	72	149	-77	8

Round 19 RESULTS Wed 28th March

6:30 FC Essendon v FC Richmond	8 – 9
7:20 FC Prahran v CF Brunswick	2 – 3
8:10 North Melbourne FC v Pascoe Vale FC	3 – 1
9:00 Ashburton FC v Metropolitan FC	5 – 10
9:50 Brimbank FC v FC Balwyn	6 – 6
10:40 Fitzroy FC v Mickleham FC	10 – 2

Round 20 CLASHES Wed 4th April

- 6:30 Ashburton FC v Mickleham FC
- 7:20 Brimbank FC v FC Richmond
- 8:10 FC Prahran v Pascoe Vale FC
- 9:00 Fitzroy FC v North Melbourne FC
- 9:50 FC Balwyn v Metropolitan FC
- 10:40 FC Essendon v CF Brunswick

Top Goal Scorers

1. Joao Da Silva	44
2. Maxi Avram	37
3. Sofiane Soufi	38
4. Alija Redzepovic	35
5. Jose Portillio	30

Catch
The Futbol Town Show
every Tuesday 7pm on C31 and C44Digital
FUTSAL OZ

Photos By
JIMMY SOUFIS & MATT MONTGOMERY

Greens, South and Thunder in big opening day wins

Conor Pain (Bentleigh Greens) almost wears Green Gully captain, Jeffrey Fleming's clearing kick. Luke O'dea is also on had for the Greens Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

Round One Results

Bentleigh Greens 4-1 Green Gully
Northcote City 2-1 Richmond
Dandenong 4-0 Southern Stars
South Melb 4-0 Moreland Zebras
Melb Knights 0-2 Hume City
Heidelberg United 0-2 Oakleigh

Round Two Fixtures

8:30 PM Fri 30/Mar
Hume City v Dandenong Thunder
Epping Soccer Stadium

8:30 PM Fri 30/Mar
Oakleigh Cannons v South Melb
Jack Edwards Reserve

8:30 PM Fri 30/Mar
Richmond v Bentleigh Greens
Kevin Bartlett Reserve

3:00 PM Sat 31/Mar
Green Gully v Heidelberg United
Green Gully Reserve

7:00 PM Sat 31/Mar
Southern Stars v Northcote City
Kingston Heath

3:00 PM Sun 1/Apr
Moreland Zebras v Melbourne Knights
Epping Soccer Stadium

Bentleigh shock Gully in VPL opener

Bentleigh Greens shocked current VPL Champions Green Gully Cavaliers 4-1 at Kingston Heath Soccer Complex on Friday night in the opening game of the 2012 season.

In the opening minutes of the first game of the Victorian Premier League (VPL) both sides started cautiously but both sides did have effort through Hamid Basma and Dominic D'Angelo.

Melbourne Victory youngster O'Dea was looking for the opener as he was found on the edge of the box but fired just wide for the hosts.

Soon after Green Gully scored the opening goal of the 2012 VPL season after Nicholas Curtis played a ball back to Victory goalkeeper Lawrence Thomas but Nikolic intercepted before finishing low past the 19-year-old goalkeeper.

Bentleigh were looking for an immediate reply but Connor Pain's low cross was cleared over the crossbar accidentally by Gully defender Daniel Jones.

Basma was looking dangerous and beat Aron Wilford to the ball before powering himself into the box but poked his effort wide, probably the best chance of the game.

Ten minutes before the break Greens had a great chance to equalise as Bulloch's effort was spilled by Rhyss Keane before Paulo Retre couldn't get an effort on target. Pain followed up but Keane made a fantastic save to deny the wide man.

Soon before the break former Perth Glory midfielder Andrija Jukic tried his luck from distance but yet another effort was fired wide. That was the luck of hosts throughout the first-half.

Early into the second-half Greens sent the big boys forward with Mile Medjedovic and Nikolic but Thomas denied the latter from close range.

On the hour mark Greens equalised when a stunning Bulloch effort deflected before flying into the top net.

One minute later Greens scored their second inside two minutes when Bulloch converted a penalty after Mile Medjedovic brought down Pain. Although Keane is goals did get a touch.

On 67 minutes Greens made it 3-1 when Pain crossed low for O'Dea to finish at the near post. Greens now had scored three goals inside seven minutes and pretty much finished off the champions.

With time ticking down Greens extended the lead with Luke O'Dea grabbing his brace. After Phillip Arnold's cross the Victory forward finished with a volley with the outside of his foot.

Northcote defeat Richmond to get off to great start

Northcote City have got their season off to a great start after defeating Richmond 2-1 at John Cain Memorial Park on Saturday afternoon.

But the game didn't start well for the hosts as Scott Muirhead thought he scored after chipping goalkeeper Chris Petropoulos but the referee ruled it out for offside.

But on four minutes Northcote took the momentum when Milos Lujic played in James Kalifatidis who finished nicely past Stjepan Gal in goals for the Eagles.

Northcote dominated in the attacking third buy both Paul Savio and Kalifatidis couldn't convert.

Michael Ferrante with his deadly free-kicks could have equalised but the curling set-piece just missed the upright.

But on 23 minutes those miss opportunities weren't really missed after Lujic powerfully finished past Gal after Kalifatidis did well to find the former Altona City forward.

Just before the break Jonathan Voulgaris and Kalifatidis both had chances but couldn't finish for the hosts.

On the hour mark Savio wasted a golden chance when Parys Okai cut back to the versatile City player.

Liam Cannell then denied Lujic's second with a fantastic block on the line.

However on 73 minutes City conceded after Petropoulos directed his kick straight into Josh Kweifio-Okai before the ball dribbled into the net.

City could have sealed the victory but first Okai's effort was saved by Gal before Lujic's header was cleared off the line.

Dandy thump Stars

Southern Stars endured a baptism of fire on Saturday in their first game back in the VPL, where they were outclassed 4-0 by Dandenong Thunder.

In the 5th minute, Thunder's Canadian import Nate Foster found himself one-on-one with Frazer Siddle, calmly laying it off for Luke Sherbon, who then coolly slotted the ball home in front of a passionate group of Dandenong supporters.

7 minutes later, after a somewhat scrap in the box, Foster volleyed home Thunder's second goal of the season, giving the hosts a 2-0 lead.

Star's first real chance came in a 20th minute counter-attack, where Leon Williams smacked the ball into the top corner, only to have it brought back for offside.

Thunder continued to dominate up until the 28th minute where some good football from Southern Stars resulted in a tame shot from Mark Leech, going wide past Stuart Webster's post.

At the half hour mark, Thunder's Liam Kearney took an audacious free kick from well outside the box, which sailed over the bar.

3 minutes later, Sherbon missed a golden chance to get his second, putting a header back across the face off goal from the back post, where a glancing header would have been enough. Sullivan would have been at fault with the goal, losing sight of Sherbon over his shoulder.

Nate Foster then displayed his speed and skill with a fantastic run, beating 3 Star's defenders and then hitting the base of the left post.

Five minutes from half time, Star's received a free kick after a foul from Craig Elvin, which ended up fooling the Thunder wall, going to a player in a box, who fell over and incited penalty claims from Star's players. In fairness, the penalty wasn't warranted.

Nine minutes into the second half, Nate Foster got his second goal from a short goal kick which was headed back to the Canadian, who beat his defender, went around the keeper and finished coolly.

The match opened up with Thunder comfortable with the three goal lead, and chances were given to David Stirton after some great football from Sullivan and Williams, but again, Stars' struggled to finish.

Then in the 69th minute, Leon Williams committed a dangerous, studs up tackle on Thunder's Andrew Mullet which sparked a melee between Stars and Thunder players.

The referee originally had a yellow card out ready to book Williams, but after consulting with his assistant, a red card was brought out, which infuriated Stars officials.

The Dandenong faithful thought they got a penalty in the 81st minute after Foster was brought down just outside the box. But Thunder still got their goal, after the free kick was taken by Sherbon into the bottom corner, which Siddle got a hand to, but Liam Kearney finished it on the re-bound.

In the finally minute of the game, Nate Foster missed out on a deserved hat-trick, after skilfully beating a defender, going around the keeper, but his touch was too heavy to get on the end of it.

The game finished 4-0 in the favour of the home side, with Stars going into next week's game with striker Leon Williams and possibly Luke Fitzpatrick too.

Match Report provided by follow Goal! Weekly reporter Donald Sutherland.

South too good for Moreland

South Melbourne were too good for newly promoted Moreland Zebras at the new Lakeside Stadium as South defeated the Zebras 4-0.

The first game at Lakeside Stadium started slowly with the first real chance not coming until 14 minutes when Nace Kosmac fired wide from outside of the box for the visitors.

South Melbourne's best chance in the opening minutes came from a Glen Trifiro corner which Luke Byles reached but headed wide.

On 25 minutes South took advantage of their next chance when Kyle Joryeff was played in by Jason Trifiro before finishing powerfully past Griffin McMaster.

South's next chance also resulted in a goal. Trent Rixon played in Joryeff whose first effort was saved well by McMaster before Joryeff finished the rebound.

Just before the break Raymond Lally was looking to grab one back for the Zebras but his long drive was comfortably saved by Peter Gavalas in goals for South.

Early into the second-half Rixon had a great chance to score South's third but the former Northcote forward's effort was fantastically cleared off the line by William Abbott.

Former South forward Steven Weir next tested Gavalas from distance but the 'keeper on his South debut made a good save.

On 59 minutes Vincent Faherty for the visitors had their best chance so far on the volley but fired wide.

Faherty had another chance later in the half but the Irishman's effort was well parried by Gavalas who was putting in a great shift on debut.

With time ticking down Jason Trifiro made it 3-0 with a nice low finish into the bottom corner.

Fernando De Moraes was given a great opportunity to extend the lead from a free-kick but McMaster denied the Brazilian with a great diving save.

Just before stoppage-time substitute Dimi Hatzimouratis made it 4-0 with a finish after another ball from the right.

South Melbourne coach Peter (Gus) Tsolakis was pleased with his side's performance in his first game in charge. "Yeah it's pleasing that we got the three points, being our first game at home that was our main objective. We had a game plan where we didn't want to concede any goals because we knew we got the players to create chances and it worked to plan."

Moreland Zebras coach Dominic Barba believed his side didn't come to play. "We just didn't come to play, simple. When we started to put some pressure on them and when we were able to do a job we were expected to do, we created three or four chances in the second-half but we didn't capitalize and to their good fortune they did and they were better on the day."

Hume takes points in scrappy affair

Hume City took all three points in a scrappy affair as they defeated Melbourne Knights 2-0 at Knights Stadium on Sunday.

The opening 20 minutes of the game was scrappy without any chances for either side.

However Hume found the opener on the edge of half-time through defender Steven Pace. The former Melbourne Victory man thundered the ball through the crowded box and into the back of the net to give his side the lead into the break.

Both sides made changes including Melbourne Victory youngster Jake Nakic who came on for Craig Sweeney.

Bobby Vidanoski also came on for the viscitors for Atilla Ofli, a move which would pay off.

The substitution did pay off for Hume on 84 minutes when Vidanoski placed the ball into the top corner after he played in by Pece Siveski.

Oakleigh win opener in entertaining clash

Oakleigh Cannons have defeated Heidelberg United 2-0 in an entertaining clash at Olympic Village on Sunday evening.

Goran Zoric, who was signed from relegated Springvale White Eagles, was the spark in the midfield and created many of chances for Ricky Diaco but Sebastian Mattei did well to keep it scoreless.

Just before the break Diaco thought he opened the scoring after finishing nicely but the referee ruled it out for offside.

Just before the hour mark Diaco opened the scoring from the spot after Jesse Krncevic was fouled inside the box.

But with eleven minutes left Heidelberg Captain George Papadopoulos was given a second yellow card.

This hurt the hosts as they couldn't find an equaliser but did go close through Saso Alexovski and Andrew Nabbout.

But five minutes before full-time Diaco finished off the victory for the visitors with a header from after creating some space inside the box.

Nick Curtis (Bentleigh Greens) pus in a big tackle against Brent Fisher (Green Gully). Photo: JOHN PUNSHON

South's Jason Trifiro and Ferndo De Moraes celebrate scorong against the Zebras. Photo: ANITA MILAS

THRILLER IN SANTIAGO WITH RUNNERS-UP OUT

Latin Wrap

Francis Fields

Last year's Copa Libertadores runners-up, Peñarol, have been eliminated from the competition with just one point from four games. They were mathematically knocked out on Wednesday by Copa Sudamericana champions Universidad de Chile, who now sit in second place in Group 8.

Elsewhere, arch-rivals Nacional of Uruguay won in Montevideo to put the heat on Vasco da Gama and Libertad.

Uruguay's Nacional earned an impotant 1-0 victory over Alianza Lima of Peru to remain in contention in Group 5 of the Copa Libertadores on Tuesday.

In other group matches, Táchira of Venezuela drew 0-0 with Nacional of Paraguay in Group 6, while in Group 8, Universidad de Chile defeated Peñarol of Uruguay drew 2-1 with a goal in second-half stoppage time. The top two teams in each group advance to the round of 16. Most teams in the tournament have played four of six group matches.

Tabaré Viudez's close-range goal in the 68th minute, chipping in a shot off a pass from Vicente Sánchez, was the winner in Nacional's victory. Nacional improved to six points in four matches. Alianza has three points in four.

Vasco da Gama of Brazil and Libertad of Paraguay lead the group with seven points in four matches.

In Santiago, Matías Rodríguez scored the winner for Universidad de Chile, and also scored his club's other goal in the second minute of the first half. Carlos Adrián Valdez leveled for Peñarol with a header in the 51st which goalkeeper Johnny Herrera failed to contain.

Group 6 action was at San Cristóbal, Venezuela, Táchira of Venezuela played a scoreless draw with Nacional of Paraguay. Táchira has two points in four matches and Nacional had four in four. Corinthians of Brazil lead Group 6 with eight points in four games and Cruz Azul of Mexico has seven in four.

Universidad de Chile improved to seven points from four matches in Group 8. Atlético Nacional of Colombia leads with eight in four games and Godoy Cruz of Argentina has five in four games. Peñarol, the runners-up last season, have only one point in four matches and has been eliminated from reaching the second round.

Thursday morning action saw Chivas, former club side of "Chicharito" Hernández losing 1-0 to Uruguay's Defensor Sporting in Montevideo. The Mexican side knew a win would put them within three points of making the knockout rounds, but the loss now leaves them eliminated.

Chivas sits bottom Group 7 of the competition after four matches, with Defensor climbing two points ahead in third place behind Argentina´s Vélez Sarsfield who leads the group on nine points, with Deportivo Quito in second but having played one more game.

Defensor Sporting is also unbeaten so far this season in the Uruguayan league, winning three and drawing one of its four games. Chivas' trip to Uruguay took 15 hours, with a stop-over in Panama City, after a tough game last Saturday against Toluca.

In group 3, Universidad Católica won 2-1 with only two minutes remaining over its fellow Chilean rival, Unión Española.

Daúd Gazale grabbed the winner on 88 minutes after a late equaliser for Unión from Gonzálo Villagra on 86 minutes stunned the home crowd at the San Carlos de Apoquindo stadium.

Católica grabbed the early lead from Paraguayan forward Roberto Ovelar in the 8th minute from some brilliant individual passing from young Chilean international midifielder Felipe Gutiérrez who also assisted with the late winner.

Católica's win leaves them third with 6 points while Unión Española despite the loss are still top of the group with 7 tied with Bolivia's Bolívar leaving everything to play for in the remaining matches.

The University side travels to the coastal city of Barranquilla in Colombia next week to face Junior - who are bottom with just the one point while Unión Española host Bolívar in Santiago at the Santa Laura stadium in the group decider.

Palmeiras midfielder Jorge Valdivia battling in the air agains tarch-rival Corinthians in the Paulista state championship.

Peñarol players involved in a scuffle with Universidad de Chile after their last-minute loss on Wednesday in the Copa Libertadores

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE UPDATE

With Chivas of Guadalajara involved in a crucial Copa Libertadores game in Uruguay and Pumas, Monterrey and Santos Laguna all in CONCACAF Champions league action, there´s plenty of action involving Mexican sides on Wednesday night.

In the CONCACAF Champions League semifinal, reigning champion Monterrey continues its defense against Pumas UNAM at the Estadio Tecnológico.

Monterrey sealed its place among the last four with a 7-2 aggregate win over Morelia, while Pumas racked up an even bigger 9-2 deficit over both legs against Salvadoran side Metapán.

Chilean international Humberto Suazo and Darío Carreño are on a hot streak, with five goals apiece in the current CONCACAF campaign, while Pumas' Martín Bravo and Eduardo Herrera have each scored four in this year's competition.

Domestically, Monterrey is enjoying the better season and is favorites to advance. Los Rayados sit fourth in the Primera División, with Pumas wallowing ten places below them. The two sides drew 1-1 back in January, but Pumas emerged victorious in their previous two encounters.

The team from Mexico City has the better head-to-head record, having won 13 of the 25 games the pair have contested, while Monterrey has won just seven.

In the other semi, Canada's Toronto FC is charged with disrupting the Mexican CCL party as it takes on Santos Laguna. The first leg is at Toronto's BMO Field, with Santos, Mexico´s league leaders, heavy favourites.

Toronto comes into the game off the back of a 3-0 loss against San Jose Earthquakes, while Monterrey easily defeated Estudiantes Tecos 4-0. The return legs for the CCL games are next Wednesday.

ESTUDIANTES LEAD IN ARGENTINE CLAUSURA

Raul Iberbia scored the winner as 10-man Estudiantes beat Argentinos Juniors 2-1 to go to the top of the Clausura, while rivals Tigre and Boca Juniors stumbled in their seventh games of the championship.

Visitors Estudiantes went ahead with a fourth-minute penalty from Mauro Boselli, after a handball by Pablo Barzola, but were pegged back when Nicolás Berardo headed the home side level after 27 minutes.

Iberbia had the decisive say with a close-range finish in the 57th minute after a low centre from Matías Sánchez. Leonardo Jara was dismissed seven minutes later but Estudiantes held on.

Estudiantes climbed above Tigre and Boca Juniors, who both stumbled in their seventh games of the championship.

Tigre were unbeaten with four wins from their opening six games but lost 1-0 away to Arsenal de Sarandí with Guillermo Burdisso heading the only goal after 65 minutes. Tigre were down to 10 men by then, having lost Ángel Díaz to a red card in the 38th minute.

Boca Juniors were held 2-2 at home by Lanús, letting a two-goal lead slip away. They went ahead in the 40th minute with a fluke goal from Pablo Mouche who sent an inswinging cross over from the right and saw the ball sail inside the far post, embarrassing goalkeeper Agustín Marchesin.

Crafty midfielder Juan Román Riquelme doubled the lead two minutes later when his low half-volley found the bottom right corner. But Lanús immediately cut into the two-goal advantage and scored when Mariano Pavone headed down and past Agustín Orión, before levelling in the 55th minute with another fine header, this time from Paolo Goltz.

Boca had defender Clemente Rodríguez sent off in the 63rd minute but did not lose another goal.

Colón Santa Fe made visitors Independiente suffer, posting a 3-0 win. Uruguayan forward Ernesto Javier Chevantón opened the scoring after 43 minutes with a composed left-footed finish, before Ivan Moreno y Fabianesi doubled the home side's lead with a deflected strike in the 56th minute.

The ball skidded on the wet pitch and found the bottom right corner. Lucas Mugni snatched the third goal five minutes later, a sweet strike to trump goalkeeper Diego Rodríguez, and Independiente finished with 10 men after substitute Cristian Pellerano was dismissed 11 minutes from the end.

DEDE HAPPY TO STAY AT VASCO

Vasco da Gama defender Dede has stressed that he is settled in Brazil for the time being despite speculation linking him with a move to Europe. The likes of Manchester United, Liverpool and Benfica have been mooted as potential suitors for Dede, 23, as his stock continues to rise in his native Brazil.

But the centre-back, whose current contract runs until December 2014, has no plans in the short-term to leave Vasco. "I'm not ready (to move to Europe)," Dede told newspaper Lancenet. "When I am, I will say. Right now, I have to enjoy what is happening to me here. It's too early to leave.

"Brazilian football is making me grow (as a player), I feel like I can represent the national team well without having to leave Brazil."

Still on Brazil, Corinthians scored two goals early in the second half to end Palmeiras' 21-match unbeaten streak with a 2-1 win in the São Paulo state championship on Sunday. Before the match, fan violence left one dead and three seriously injured.

In the Rio de Janeiro state tournament, Vasco da Gama was held to a 1-1 draw by Resende, while Flamengo, Fluminense and Botafogo won their matches on Saturday.

Luiz Felipe Scolari's Palmeiras went ahead with a long-range shot by former Real Betis midfielder Marcos Assuncão in the 18th minute, but Corinthians rallied with quick goals in the first seven minutes of the second half. Paulinho equalized in the 50th and the Brazilian champion moved ahead in the 52nd with an own goal by Palmeiras midfielder Marcio Araújo.

São Paulo took the lead from Palmeiras in the 20-team standings by beating Mirassol 1-0 for its seventh straight win. Defender Rodolfo scored Sao Paulo's winner in Mirassol in the 64th.

São Paulo reached 34 points from 15 matches, tied with Corinthians, but it is ahead on goal difference. Palmeiras is stuck with 32 points, two more than Santos. The top eight teams will advance to the playoff round.

Palmeiras opened the scoring at the Pacaembu stadium with Assuncao's right-footer from outside the area. The ball deflected off a defender and fooled Corinthians goalkeeper Julio Cesar, striking the crossbar before going in.

Palmeiras was mostly in control, but Corinthians rallied with goals from set pieces just after the halftime. Paulinho scored from close range after a ball deflected in front of net, and Araujo tipped the ball into his own goal after another cross into the area.

Palmeiras, Brazil's most successful club with eight national titles along with Santos, hadn't lost a match since November 6.

"We know the fans didn't want to lose this one, but it happened," Scolari said. "We have to keep working to stay near the top of the standings going into the final round."

Before the match, fans from both teams were involved in a confrontation involving about 500 people, according to police, a 21-year-old Palmeiras fan was killed after being shot in the head. Another fan was shot in the hip and two other were also hospitalized in serious condition.

Police had to use tear gas and rubber bullets to halt the confrontation and at least four people were detained. Authorities were investigating reports the fight was set up ahead of time on social media networks.

Santos, led by Neymar and Paulo Henrique Ganso, beat Bragantino 2-0 with goals by Alan Kardec and Borges at the Vila Belmiro stadium. Santos played with an extra man from the 53rd because Bragantino defender Jean Pablo was sent off.

In the Rio Cup, the second stage of the Rio de Janeiro state championship, Vasco was not able to get past a 1-1 home draw with Resende. Striker Alecsandro missed a penalty shot in the 58th but netted the equalizer for Vasco in the 83rd at Sao Januario stadium.

Former CSKA striker Vagner Love scored two goals as Flamengo defeated Volta Redonda 4-2 at the Raulino de Oliveira stadium. Flamengo had midfielder Luiz Antonio sent off in the first half, and two players from Volta Redonda were shown red cards in the final minutes.

Fred scored both goals in Fluminense's 2-0 win over Bonsucesso in Moca Bonita, while Fellype Gabriel and forward Jobson scored a goal each in Botafogo's 2-0 win over Duque de Caxias at the Engenhão stadium in Rio.

The top two teams in each of the two groups will advance to the Rio Cup semifinals. Botafogo and Flamengo are ahead in Group A, while Bangu and Vasco lead Group B, ahead of Fluminense, which won the Guanabara Cup and has already secured a chance to play for the overall state title against the Rio Cup winner.

The Brazilian national championship begins in May, and regional championships are played in the first months of the year, which does not follow the European calendar.

CONCACAF LONDON OLYMPIC QUALIFIERS

Mexico advanced to the semifinal round of CONCACAF Olympic qualifying with ease, dispatching Panama 1-0 in the third group game thanks to an Erick Torres 90th minute goal.

In all three group stage games Mexico's U23s scored 11 goals and conceded one. Now El Tri will face Canada in the semis, with the winner qualifying for the summer Olympic games in London. Honduras and El Salvador will meet in the other semi.

"El Cubo" Torres made his first start of the qualifying tournament with progression already assured. The 19-year-old scored in injury time off Mexico's only shot on goal.

Although Mexico rolled through group play, coach Luis Fernando Tena said that his squad is not taking opponents lightly in a bid for El Tri's first Olympic Berth since 2004.

"I'm worried of course about Canada, we're not overconfident in the least and we have to be alert. There's a reason that Canada beat the United States and I think that speaks well," Tena said. "Their players have a good attitude and they showed their level, we're going to see their same thing."

The disappointment of the qualifying tournament has been the United States. An easy first win over Cuba meant an eager beginning however the U.S. were expected to qualify for the Olympics this March. Some speculated that the United States were capable of "making waves" this summer. Instead, they found their way into the news for the wrong reasons with a 3-3 draw to El Salvador.

National team coach Jurgen Klinsmann came out fighting – on behalf of his players, himself and the system he believes can turn this county into an international powerhouse.

A shocking defeat to Canada in the second match of Group A was critical as Klinsmann was at LP Field to see the USA's under-23s miss out on a place in the London Olympic Games in devastating fashion, when an injury-time goalkeeping meltdown from Sean Johnson allowed El Salvador to grab a 3-3 draw.

COPA AMERICA HOSTS DECIDED

Chile will host the 2015 Copa América after Brazil backed out.

Chilean football federation president Sergio Jadue confirmed the move on Saturday after Brazilian officials decided the calendar was too crowded with three major events in the country in the next several years: The Confederations Cup in 2013, the World Cup in 2014 and the Olympics in 2016 leaving Brazil to host the continental tournament in 2019.

Jadue says Chile "will organise a very good Copa América. It is an important tournament and big news for the country."

Chile last hosted the South American championship in 1991. The host cities will be announced within the next year with the final scheduled to be played in Santiago at its national stadium.

Uruguay won the 2011 Copa in Argentina defeating Paraguay in the final.

What a season to farewell!

Finally, last but not least, it has been a pleasure once again to fulfill reporting duties covering football from across the American continent for Goal! Weekly.

Since football first arrived and was introduced from the British on the ports of a number of establishing cities in the 1800s, it became engraved in the culture and boiled into the bloodstreams of Latin Americans. It is essentially a way of life.

And that could not be ignored to the Australian football fan, given our diverse and multicultural society. Football has enriched Australia with players hailing from all over the globe. A little insight every week only adds to feeding thoughts for everybody interested from World Cup qualifiers, to the prestigious Copa Libertadores club tournament, the Copa Sudamericana and the various leagues including the high-profile Brazilian championship, the Mexican and Argentinian first divisions.

As the great Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano famously quoted, "in today's world many people find football the only area of identity in which they recognise themselves and in which they really believe. Whatever the reasons may be, collective dignity has a lot to do with the passage of a ball flying through the air.

I do not mean only the communion the fan experiences with his team each Sunday from the stands at the stadium, but also, above all, the game played in the paddocks, in the little fields, on the beaches, the few public spaces still not devoured by urbanisation".

See you all next season and stay in touch on our website.

Arsenal look to end season on a high

60,000 gasps of air ring around the Emirates stadium. You would have thought the opposition had just scored, or a key player had just gone down to the floor injured.

You'd of been wrong, of course. The sharp intake of collective breathes instead represented the pre-match anxiety, once the natives had heard the news. The news was Laurent Koscielny had been withdrawn from the starting eleven due to tendinitis. The French centre-back has been in imperious form for Arsenal this season, almost of all it - arguably only Vincent Kompany of Manchester City has been better in this position over the last eight months in the Premier League. The fear on Saturday afternoon increased when the home fans realised who'd replace Koscielny -- Johan Djourou. It didn't used to be like that, though. He used be, relatively speaking, a respected defender round these parts. Last season, the Ivory Coast-born Swiss international endured a marvelous six months or so - with his display in the home victory against the European Champions Barcelona drawing most applauds. But that was then, this is now. As the cliche goes: A lot can change in football very quickly - and Djourou has been an unfortunate victim of that. Why? A shoulder injury suffered at Old Trafford twelve months ago in the FA cup seemed to signal the derail of the 25-year old, he just hasn't been the same since. Lapses in concentration, poor marking and other erratic moments have crept back into Djourou's game, just like before last season's good spell.

But gooners needn't worry. Not on the weekend anyway. Aston Villa offered little, and the Arsenal defence had a day off. One member of the back four, Kieran Gibbs, netted the opener too. The only gunners defender who had anything to clear up was, you guessed it, Djourou, yet even then it wasn't attacks that needed clearing, it was the blood pouring from his nose, following an elbow from Emile Heskey, Villa's clumsy forward. Theo Walcott and Mikel Arteta (both goals glorious in their own right) joined Gibbs on the score-sheet, and Arsene Wenger could relax. The 3-0 win was the first time Arsenal had won 7 consecutive league games in five years. Not since October 2007 had the North London club won so many fixtures in a row. Back then, the seventh victory came against Bolton Wanderers at the Emirates. The 2-0 win that day was achieved with a team consisting of: Almunia; Sagna Toure Gallas Clichy; Eboue Fabregas Flamini Hleb; Adebayor Eduardo. Only the first two names on that list still reside at Ashburton Grove (the Emirates' non-sponsored name) - and even then, the keeper has not even featured in the Premier League this season. The past five years at Arsenal have seen more comings and goings than most other sides - not all of it is through design, though. In fact, most of it isn't through design. How Wenger would love to still have the option of writing Fabregas' name onto the team-sheet every weekend.

But of course, the current Arsenal side can beat that side's feat this weekend. Wenger takes his side to Queens Park Rangers on Saturday, a short trip from North to West London. Mark Hughes replaced Neil Warnock in January, but has won only only 2 of his 10 league games in charge. QPR currently sit 18th in England's top-flight, meaning if the season ended tomorrow, they would return to the Championship. But it doesn't end tomorrow, and QPR have the fire-power to get out of their predicament (though Djibril Cisse's second red card since arriving at Loftus road does take a bit of the edge off of that sentence). Hughes' side ARE actually quite good on paper - Taarabt, Cisse, Wright-Phillips, Barton, Zamora - but their failure to gel has been paramount to the Hoops' disappointing season. Though the names, and the 3-2 win against Liverpool last week, mean Arsenal can't afford to be complacent.

A win against QPR would mean 8 successive league victories of course - that hasn't happened since the 'Invincible' days. To be precise, March 2004. The line-up that secured the eighth consecutive win? (Arsenal actually won 9 in a row, but the 8th win was against Blackburn Rovers). Lehmann; Lauren Toure Campbell Cole; Pires Vieira Gilberto Edu; Reyes Henry. No one in that eleven still play for the club, although Henry, Lehmann and Campbell have all returned in recent times, for minor stints. The chance to equal the legendary side's feat should motivate the players enough. But, in truth, it's not these sort of achievements that concern Wenger or the players. It's wrapping up third place, and with it, automatic Champions League qualification.

Few can forget the difficulty a European play-off against Udinese caused the side earlier this season. Despite beating the Italians in both legs, Arsenal's league form suffered. Badly. Losses against Liverpool (2-0) and Manchester united (8-2) still hurt some fans - the latter result will never be forgotten.

Who would have thought on that afternoon at Old Trafford that Arsenal would have the chance nine months later to equal something achieved by the 'Invincibles' side? Football really does change very quickly.

Away teams take the advantage in UCL quarters

Matthew Galea

APOEL 0-3 Real Madrid

Real Madrid moved closer to a Champions League semi-final spot, after beating APOEL Nicosia 3-0 in their quarter-final in Cyprus on Tuesday.

Three second-half goals - two to Karim Benzema and one to Kaka - gave Jose Mourinho's men a priceless away win at GSP Stadium, which virtually seals their spot in the final four after the first leg.

The Spanish giants looked for a fourth goal without success, but they will go into the second leg next Wednesday at Santiago Bernabeu with one foot in the semi-finals.

Benfica 0-1 Chelsea

Salomon Kalou scored an important away goal as Chelsea defeated Benfica 1-0 to take a vital lead in their Champions League quarter-final.

The first half started very slowly but things heated up after the break, Mario Jardel coming close with a free header before Fernando Torres' impressive assist from the right wing opened up space for Kalou to tap home untroubled with 15 minutes to go.

Marseille 0 Bayern Munich 2

Bayern Munich took a big step towards progression in the Champions League after a 2-0 win away to Marseille on Wednesday.

Franck Ribery's return to the Stade Velodrome was not exactly a comfortable one, but the visitors overcame stiff resistance as they ensured a sizable advantage ahead of the second leg of the quarter-final clash in Munich.

One minute before half-time, Mario Gomez found the net under some controversy, after a suspected handball at the other end.

The goal counted nonetheless, and Marseille were forced to try to overturn the deficit. However, Arjen Robben scored a crucial second goal on 69 minutes, leaving the hosts with a mountain to climb.

Chances were few and far between in what was a physical opening half. Though cautious in their approach, the hosts were first to pose a threat on goal and were unfortunate not to take the lead on seven minutes.

The result sees Bayern take a commanding lead into the second leg, which will be played on April 3. The winner of the two-legged tie will face either APOEL or Real Madrid in the semi-finals.

Lionel Messi tries to weave his magic past a resolute AC MIlan defence.

AC Milan 0 Barcelona 0

AC Milan held Barcelona to a 0-0 stalemate in their Champions League quarter-final first-leg clash at San Siro on Wednesday night.

The visitors had their chances, among them a no-call on a penalty claim on Alexis Sanchez, but a sterling defensive display by Massimiliano Allegri's men saw the Spanish outfit frustrated and sets up an enthralling second leg at Camp Nou next Tuesday.

Minutes before the end, Abbiati was on hand to deny Messi, beating away the Argentine's low drive, with Tello also thwarted from the rebound by another brilliant tackle from Antonini as Milan preserved the 0-0 scoreline.

Ibrahimovic happy to grab draw against Barca

AC Milan striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic was satisfied with a draw against Barcelona in their Champions League quarter-final on Wednesday.

The Swede missed a great chance to score against his former club in the first leg of the tie, but with Milan able to shut out the Catalan giants and prevent an away goal, Ibrahimovic remains in good spirits for the second leg at Camp Nou next week.

We had some opportunities but, unfortunately, we unable to score," Ibrahimovic told Sky Sport 24.

"However, the result is very good for us. I am optimistic for the second leg."

Fellow forward Urby Emanuelson is also looking to move on quickly to the return leg, after spurning a great opportunity within seconds of his arrival as a substitute during the second half.

"My appearance was a bit unlucky. In my first action I could have scored but forgot the ball. That can happen," Emanuelson told NOS.

"I know that was a very important moment, but what can I do about it right now after the match? Let's try better next time.

"I think we will get chances next week. Barcelona always play their own game, so we will have opportunities."

Emanuelson - a Netherlands international - was also relieved that his side were able to keep Barca maestro Lionel Messi at bay during the game, with the Argentine forward unable to add to his 12 Champions League goals in the current campaign.

"Messi played like Messi. He's always dangerous and never plays a bad match. We're glad he did not score tonight," the Dutchman said.

A Club in a Nutshell

With Jimmy Piccolo

Olympique de Marseille

Olympique de Marseille founded in 1899 play in the top flight of French football known as Ligue 1. The Stade Vélodrome is their home, with a capacity of 60,031 it is one of the most impressive in Europe and regularly enjoys a full house.

No, wonder, because Marseille are a top team. They have won the champions of France title nine times in their history(second to AS Saint-Etienne-the most successful French team),although they could have equalled the ten Ligue 1 titles won by AS Saint-Étienne if only they had not gotten themselves relegated and had the winners trophy taken from them due to a bribery scandal doh! Still they did manage to keep their mitts on the UEFA Champions League title of the same year (the only French club in history to win it)

Marseille celebrate their UEFA Champions League triumph in 1993

The Stade Velodrome prepares for its heroes.

Marseille is the second largest city in France after Paris. Located on the South east coast of France on the Mediterranean coast and largest commercial port. A beautiful place with wonderful weather and incredible history, so much so, that Marseille has been designated as European Capital of Culture in 2013.

Sounds like a nice place to play, it is, and so attracts top players such as Jean-Pierre Papin,he won the Ballon d'Or in 1991 a fabulous and highly prized trophy also known as the the Golden Ball(the trophy is a golden football)or commonly referred to as "the European Footballer of the Year award".

This prestigious award was conceived in 1956 by a French football writer by the name of Gabriel Hanot and the first winner was Sir Stanley Mathews(the wizard of dribble). Other winners of this award are considered the finest footballers ever to grace the field such as: Franz Beckenbauer,Johan Cruyff ,Michel Platini,Gary Lineker ,Dino Zoff,Kevin Keegan,Lionel Messi, Zinedine Zidane,Paolo Rossi,Karl-Heinz Rummenigge,Marco van Basten and Kenny Dalglish to name but a few of the greats.

Didier Drogba, Fabrizio Ravanelli, Rudi Völler, FranckRibéry, Laurent Blanc, François Bracci, Samir Nasri, Robert Pirès, Didier Deschamps, Chris Waddle, Dragan Stojković, Marcel Desailly and Roger Scotti are just some of the many great players that have played for the Olympique de Marseille(all over 100 appearances).

If you know anything about French football, you will have heard of Le Classique, the derby game of mammoth proportion and bitter rivalry between North and South or Paris Saint-Germain versus Olympique de Marseille. No doubt during the "Provence"leg of the match, the Marseille stadium announcer plays their customary track "Jump" by Van Halen at full volume or maybe its cranked up to number 11 on the amplifiers volume control. The only two teams in France to have won European trophies so far has Marseille clinging onto the bragging rights having won the most of Le Classique derby matches(32).

Currently Les Phocéens(The club took their nickname from the Greek settlers that discovered Marseille "the Phoenicians")- are way off the pace in 9th place and looking jaded, but no doubt they will be back in contention at some point in the near future, such is the might of the club.

The Dalglish Reign: Success or Failure?

London Eye

Eddie Gray

A Carling Cup trophy and a place already secured in the F.A. Cup semi finals would be a fantastic season for many clubs in the Premier League.

However for Liverpool, this campaign can be looked upon with disappointment and frustration as well as positively.

Currently struggling in seventh place, languishing eight points behind sixth place Newcastle, and having only won one of their last six league games means the Reds are certain to miss out on Champions League football once again.

Anfield has not witnessed a Champions League game since the departure of Rafael Benitez way back in 2010, an alarming amount of time for a club that dominated European football so comprehensively in the 70's and 80's.

Ever since the 2008-09 season where Liverpool were narrowly beaten to the title by local rivals Manchester United, despite scoring their highest amount of league points ever (86), the Merseyside outfit have been on a steady decline.

Prior to Dalglish's second reign as manager, Roy Hodgson was put in charge after a brilliant spell at Fulham in a bid to return Champions League football to Merseyside but the Englishman couldn't reproduce on the bigger stage and was sacked after just 31 games which led to the return of King Kenny.

Cup of joy: Kenny Dalglish, the Liverpool manager, gets his hands on the Carlling Cup trophy

Now with new owners providing funds to improve the squad Dalglish wasted little time in strengthening a weak Liverpool side.

The Scotsman brought in Luis Suarez, Andy Carroll, Stewart Downing, Jordan Henderson and Charlie Adam in a bid to revamp any hopes of winning a 19th league title.

The new men clearly showed that the former European Cup winner wanted a largely British based squad to work with, something different from the Benitez and Hodgson eras.

However, buying British came at a price. Carroll set the Anfield outfit back a hefty £35 million and the arrivals of Suarez, Downing and Henderson also cost a large amount, the best part of £20 million a piece.

It was only Adam that was captured for a smaller fee; the Scottish international was brought in from Blackpool for a rumoured £8 million in what was considered a bargain deal.

On paper the acquisitions looked impressive despite the fees that accompanied them: Suarez came from Holland with a large reputation already, Carroll had looked unplayable at Newcastle and Downing, Henderson and Adam had been in great form for their previous clubs.

With four out of the five having played in England before it has surprised many that the only man who hasn't ,Suarez, is the one who has performed consistently at a high level since his arrival.

Carroll, the former Newcastle man, has failed to settle so far which has raised many questions over his large transfer fee.

The England international has struggled to adapt to the Liverpool style of play where the ball is largely kept on the floor instead of being targeted towards his head.

This has resulted in the front man being consigned to the substitute's bench which in turn has led to a down turn in form.

Henderson and Downing have also seemingly failed to come to terms with life at Anfield. Both have shown glimpses of the talent they posses, Downing more so than Henderson, but they have not done so in enough games to warrant their £20 million transfer fees so far.

Adam started brighter than the other three, replicating some of his form from his highly successful spell at Blackpool, but has faded as the season has gone on with Jay Spearing now favoured for a starting berth in midfield.

With all the Dalglish signings considered, his transfer activity so far can be judged as poor.

Suarez is the only one who can be deemed a success but even he has had problems scoring goals as well as causing unwanted controversy for the club with his racist attack on Patrice Evra that led to an eight game ban and then more recently snubbing a hand shake with the Frenchman.

With the new breed of Liverpool players failing to perform for Dalglish it has resulted in limited success.

The Carling Cup victory in February shows signs of progression but even that triumph was a narrow one, only just beating Championship side Cardiff on penalties.

A place in the F.A. Cup semi finals is already secured, as mentioned earlier, and the Merseyside outfit stand every chance of winning their second cup of the season in that competition.

Two cups in a campaign would be a huge step in the right direction but it would cause problems for next year when you consider their league position.

Liverpool look certain to miss out on Europa League spot via the Premier League qualification system, let alone the Champions League, which means they will have to come back from pre season in late July to start their European journey, a side affect of winning the League Cup.

The Europa League schedule plays havoc with teams as the amount of games that have to be played is astronomical compared to other sides not in the competition.

This means when the 2012-2013 season reaches its latter stages they could be left fatigued and possibly fall away at the crunch end of the campaign.

Therefore if Liverpool are to arrest their current slump in the Premier League they will have to prioritise Champions League qualification over cup success otherwise mediocrity in the domestic table could become all too familiar.

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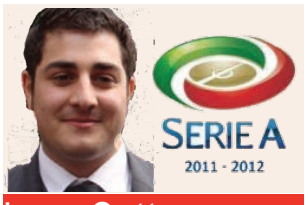

Luca **Cetta**

Ranieri sacked as Milan maintain gap

Defeat at Juventus cost Inter boss Claudio Ranieri his job as Milan overcame Roma to continue their winning run. Lazio took control of third place and it is as you were at the bottom.

Juventus met Inter in the Derby D'Italia with pre-match talk again surrounding the Calciopoli scandal and Juve's 'stolen' 2006 Scudetto. The fans promised a great pre-match choreography display and revealed 29 Scudetti in the stands of the Juventus Stadium.

When the action commenced, Inter started the hungrier of the two, putting title-chasing Juve on the back foot. Gianluigi Buffon was called upon to deny Diego Milito twice and Diego Forlan as Alessandro Matri wasted two chances at the other end.

Martin Caceres was left completely free at an Andrea Pirlo corner early in the second half to nod in the opening goal and veteran Alessandro Del Piero sealed the result 20 minutes from time, slotting home an Arturo Vidal through ball.

Antonio Conte was in tears at the final whistle as he mourned the loss of an aunt the day before the match, whilst Inter President Massimo Moratti was not in a jovial mood either. On Monday, he firstly announced "I think that Ranieri will stay with us until June," before sacking the tactician hours later. Andrea Stramaccioni – Inter's youth team Coach who led his side to the inaugural NextGen Series trophy on Sunday – is in charge for the rest of the season.

Inter Milan said arriverderci to Claudio Ranieri this week.

Milan prepared for their mouth-watering Champions League tie with Barcelona by defeating Roma, but only after going a goal down. The Rossoneri had the better of the opening stanza and hit the post early on, however Pablo Osvaldo diverted a Daniele De Rossi shot on target to give the visitors the lead.

Simon Kjaer handballed inside the penalty area after the break to give Zlatan Ibrahimovic the chance to level proceedings – a chance he duly converted. The Swede won it seven minutes from time, lifting the ball over the onrushing Marteen Stekelenburg, before outmuscling Kjaer to head into an empty net.

It was a dramatic weekend in the battle for third place. Lazio left it until three minutes from time for Mobido Diakite to head them to victory over Cagliari, as Udinese also scored inside the final ten minutes to salvage a draw at Palermo, for whom Fabrizio Miccoli opened the scoring.

Napoli looked set to defeat Catania as second half strikes from Blerim Dzemaili – a belter from distance – and Edinson Cavani gave the hosts a two goal advantage. However, Napoli were twice beaten at set pieces as Nicolas Spolli and then Davide Lanzafame drew the Sicilian club level. They are now six points away from a Europa League spot as Napoli and Udinese remain equal on points, three behind Lazio.

It looked to be a pivotal week for the relegation battle on paper but four draws meant little changed. Novara came within inches of defeating Lecce when Takayuki Morimoto struck the woodwork in injury time, but they had to settle for a 0-0 draw.

Chievo and Siena drew 1-1 and there were two see-sawing 2-2 draws, as both Cesena and Fiorentina were pegged back after taking a 2-1 advantage over Parma and Genoa respectively. In the weekends other match, Atalanta triumphed 2-0 over Bologna.

Milan faces a tricky clash away at in-form Catania on Saturday, just days after their encouraging 0-0 draw versus Barcelona in Europe's top club competition. The Rossoneri were rocked by news the injury Thiago Silva suffered against Roma has ruled him out for at least a month, whilst Alessandro Nesta and Robinho are in doubt after hobbling off on Wednesday. Djamel Mesbah and Sulley Muntari will be suspended for the trip south.

Juventus face Napoli a day later with both sides needing a win to keep pace in their respective battles. They played out an entertaining 3-3 draw earlier in the season but a similar result will be detrimental. Napoli are at full strength, with the Bianconeri recovering Stephan Lichtsteiner.

New Inter tactician Stamaccioni starts off at home against Genoa. After just one win in ten in Serie A the Nerazzurri desperately need to rectify the situation to just qualify for the Europa League. They face a Genoa side on a similar run of poor form, having not won in their past eight matches. Pasquale Marino's reign at the Grifoni may be teetering on the edge.

Udinese and Lazio are on the road at Siena and Parma respectively. In these two Europe versus relegation clashes, both Champions League hopefuls will look to take advantage of any Napoli slip-up, but Udinese's record of just three away wins this campaign ensures there will be plenty for Francesco Guidolin to mull over. Siena are a point above Parma, who hold a five-point gap over 18th placed Lecce.

The Salentini must beat doomed Cesena in order to keep their hopes of avoiding relegation alive and well. Lecce have lost just one of their last eight, but need to turn draws – five during their unbeaten run – into wins. Meanwhile, Roma could put the final nail in Novara's coffin when they meet at the Stadio Olimpico. The Piedmont side are currently eight points from safety.

Bologna host the inconsistent Palermo as Cagliari entertains injury-hit Atalanta. Finally, Fiorentina will look to give themselves relegation breathing space at home to Chievo, who are also in the mid-table struggle.

Real Just One Match From Disaster

Pepe **Lopez**

Late equalising freekicks in successive matches against Malaga and Villarreal, has left Real Madrid just 6 points ahead of rivals Barcelona FC, with still a match between the two clubs to be played at Barcelona's Nou Camp Stadium.

If as expected Barcelona win their home match against Real Madrid, the difference between the sides could be just 3 points, and Real Madrid left with arguably the hardest remaining 9 matches of the 2011-2012 La Liga season. Including this weekend's away trip to 6th placed Osasuna in the Basque Region, Real Madrid also face away fixtures to local rivals Atletico Madrid on the 11th of April and Athletic Bilbao on the 2nd of May.

Real Madrid did not panic after their second successive draw, they well and truly lost the plot. Four red cards were dished out to the league leaders.

Players Sergio Ramos and Mesut Ozil, as well as officials, Jose Mourinho and Rui Faria all saw red and were given their marching orders away to Villarreal. There was not a knee-jerk reaction to the La Liga from Real Madrid at having received four cards, there was a virtual declaration of war. Real Madrid suspended their attendance to press conferences with their next fixture at home against Real Sociedad. Real Sociedad were spanked 5-1.

Former Barcelona FC Player and Coach Johan Cruyff spoke out against Real Madrid's behavior; "Madrid are sore losers looking for excuses. Against Malaga and Villarreal, they did not do any worse than when they played against Betis or Rayo Vallecano. They won matches when they did not deserve to and they drew matches when they had everything to win. It is just that simple.

Nowadays, Madrid either win or they are left angry. There is no middle ground."

Can Real keep their noses in front in La Liga...?

It wasn't just Real Madrid's rivals who critical of there media blackout, criticism also came from within, former player Carlos Alonso Gonzalez, nicknamed "Santialla", made these comments; "I do not know what caused this media silence. The ideal thing would be for the club and the players to have a good rapport with the press.

But it is not the first time that this has happened. There has been tension in other times, football is just like this. But a club like Real Madrid must forget about mistakes that referees make. Sometimes they get it right, sometimes they do not."

Rumours of Jose Mourinho's departure from Real Madrid continue to thrive, the latest source of speculation was the presence of former player and now Sporting Director of Real Madrid Zinedine Zidane on the coach's bench in Real Madrid's last home match; "Sooner or later I hope to move into coaching. But I have still a long time ahead of me. I am not overwhelmed by the thought of it, and I am in no hurry to get into it. For now I am focused on learning, which is what I need to evolve."

Alex **Milic**

Serbia

Partizan remains six points clear at the top following round 20 of the SuperLiga. The defending champions overcame a lacklustre Hajduk in Kula with a double from Nemanja Tomic.

Despite the win the 'Black and Whites' really struggled to play the football they are known for and can consider themselves lucky to get the three points. Avram Grant's men are on the road again although not to far from home as they take on local rivals Rad over the weekend.

Red Star defeated relegation strugglers Borac Cacak 2:0 in front of 30,000 fans at the 'Marakana' with goals to Darko Lazovic and Brazilian midfielder Cadu. The 'Red and Whites' were coming off an impressive Cup win over arch rivals Partizan and another win by two goals gave them a huge boost for the remainder of the season. Manager Robert Prosinecki has been offered a new contract which will see him at the helm until 2014, the news comes after Croatian media have linked the 42 year old to the Dinamo Zagreb Managerial position and see him as Slaven Bilic's successor as Croatia boos after the European Championships. Red Star welcomes Hajduk in Round 21 with another bumper crowd expected.

Radnicki failed to take advantage of Vojvodina's loss to OFK. The team from Kragujevac drew with BSK but a win could have seen them leap into third position as a goal from OFK striker Osmanagic gave the 'Romantics' a surprise win over the 'Red and Whites' from Novi Sad. Vojvodina will be hoping to bounce back when they take on fifth placed Jagodina.

Croatia

Dinamo Zagreb put four past bottom of the table Varazdin, all of the goals came in the second half as Ibanez, Tomecak, Alispahic and Krstanovic got on the score-sheet. The best club from Croatia takes on local side Lokomotiva in the small derby over the weekend. Lokomotiva led by former Yugoslavia goalkeeper Tomislav Ivkovic (famous for saving Diego Maradona's penalty in the 1990 World Cup Quarter Final shoot-out) have been one of the big surprises this season, they have played great football and are well ogranised under Ivkovic.

A goal from Caktas was the difference as Hajduk edged out Cibalia. The team from Split takes on third placed Slaven in Round 23. Slaven striker Davor Vugrinec will be looking to score a record breaking goal as he equaled the Croatian Leagues all time goal-scorer Igor Cvitanovic's record of 126 goals.

Former Hajduk striker Nikica Jelavic was the hero for Everton in the FA Cup as he scored one and played a large part in the second as the 'Toffees' defeated Sunderland to book a Semi-Final with city rivals Liverpool.

Greece

Panathinaikos were deducted three points for their role in the derby match against Olympiakos which was suspended with the 'Red and Whites' leading. This puts the defending champions seven points clear at the top of the standings.

Olympiakos thrashed Asteras 7-2 with Belgian talent Kevin Mirallas scoring four of the goals, Djebbour, Orbaiz and Fuster also got in the action, the strange thing was that all the goals came when Olympiakos was down 2:0 early strikes from Navarro and Martins put the visitors in the lead early on.

Pana edged out OFI in Crete. Liberopoulos was the hero for AEK in a 1:0 win over Panaitlikos. PAOK overpowered Kerkyra 4:0 with a brace from Lazar. Mitrouglu got the winner for third placed Atromitos against Xanthi.

In Round 27, Panathinaikos welcomes Aris, PAOK take on Giannina, league leaders Olympiakos is on the road against Panaitlikos.

Turkey

Galatasaray's lead at the top has been cut to seven points, as the league leaders dropped two points at home in the derby against Trabzonspor. Felipe Melo salvaged a point for the home side with les than ten minutes remaining. The visitors led through Burak Yilmaz who opened the scoring in the 24th minute.

Fenerbahce got the win through Alex against Bursaspor. Istanbul and Besiktas shared the spoils in a thrilling 2:2 draw. The home side lead early on through Inac but the 'Black and Whites' leveled the scores before the break through Portuguese international Manuel Fernandes, they took the lead when Mustafa Pektemek put the ball in the back of the net at the start of the second half. The home side thoroughly deserved the point when Bosnian International Edin Visca scored the equalizer with twenty minutes remaining.

In Round 33 Gala welcomes Orduspor with a great chance to confirm the title. Trabzonsor takes on Fernerbahce in the derby match of the round. James Troisi's Kayserispor is dropping further down the table, they are currently 13th.

Davor Vugrinec

Euro Scoreboard

ENGLAND EPL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Manchester United	30	23	4	3	74	27	+47	73	W W W W W
2 Manchester City	30	22	4	4	72	22	+50	70	D W L W W
3 Arsenal	30	18	4	8	61	39	+22	58	W W W W W
4 Tottenham Hotspur	30	16	7	7	53	35	+18	55	D D L L L
5 Chelsea	30	14	8	8	49	34	+15	50	D L W L W
6 Newcastle United	30	14	8	8	44	42	+2	50	W W L D D
7 Liverpool	30	11	9	10	36	31	+5	42	L L W L L
8 Sunderland	30	11	7	12	39	34	+5	40	W L W D L
9 Everton	30	11	7	12	30	32	-2	40	W L L W D
10 Swansea City	30	10	9	11	34	36	-2	39	L W W W L
11 Norwich City	30	10	9	11	41	47	-6	39	W L D L L
12 Stoke City	30	10	8	12	29	41	-12	38	D D L W W
13 Fulham	30	9	9	12	37	41	-4	36	L L L W W
14 West Bromwich …	30	10	6	14	36	41	-5	36	L D L W W
15 Aston Villa	29	7	12	10	31	38	-7	33	L W D D L
16 Blackburn Rovers	30	7	7	16	43	62	-19	28	L W W D L
17 Bolton Wanderers	29	8	2	19	33	58	-25	26	W W L L L
18 Queens Park Ra…	30	6	7	17	33	53	-20	25	L W L D L
19 Wigan Athletic	30	5	10	15	27	55	-28	25	W D D L D
20 Wolverhampton …	30	5	7	18	31	65	-34	22	L L L L D

SPAIN La Liga

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Real Madrid	29	24	3	2	95	26	+69	75	W D D W W
2 Barcelona	29	21	6	2	84	22	+62	69	W W W W W
3 Valencia	29	13	8	8	45	36	+9	47	L L W D W
4 Málaga	29	14	5	10	44	41	+3	47	W W D W W
5 Levante	29	13	5	11	41	40	+1	44	L W W L W
6 Osasuna	29	10	13	6	34	41	-7	43	W D D W D
7 Espanyol	29	11	7	11	37	39	-2	40	L D W W L
8 Atlético Madrid	29	10	9	10	39	35	+4	39	L W L W D
9 Sevilla	29	10	9	10	33	31	+2	39	W W L L D
10 Getafe	29	10	9	10	31	36	-5	39	W D W W L
11 Athletic Club	29	9	11	9	44	40	+4	38	D L L L W
12 Rayo Vallecano	29	11	4	14	42	49	-7	37	L L W L W
13 Mallorca	29	9	9	11	31	37	-6	36	L W W D D
14 Real Sociedad	29	9	6	14	32	45	-13	33	L L L W L
15 Real Betis	29	9	5	15	33	43	-10	32	D D L L L
16 Villarreal	29	7	10	12	30	42	-12	31	W D L L L
17 Granada	29	9	4	16	27	46	-19	31	L L W L L
18 Racing Santander	29	4	13	12	23	44	-21	25	D L L L L
19 Sporting Gijón	29	6	7	16	28	54	-26	25	D L L W L
20 Real Zaragoza	29	6	7	16	25	51	-26	25	W W D L W

ITALY Serie A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Milan	29	19	6	4	59	23	+36	63	W W W W D
2 Juventus	29	15	14	0	46	17	+29	59	W W D D D
3 Lazio	29	15	6	8	43	34	+9	51	W L L W W
4 Napoli	29	12	12	5	54	32	+22	48	D D W W W
5 Udinese	29	13	9	7	40	27	+13	48	D D L D W
6 Roma	29	13	5	11	42	35	+7	44	L W W L L
7 Catania	29	10	12	7	38	37	+1	42	D W W D D
8 Internazionale	29	12	5	12	38	38	+0	41	L D W D L
9 Atalanta	29	10	13	6	33	29	+4	37	W D D D W
10 Bologna	29	9	9	11	31	35	-4	36	L D W D W
11 Palermo	29	10	6	13	41	46	-5	36	D D L L L
12 Chievo	29	9	9	11	25	36	-11	36	D D L D W
13 Cagliari	29	8	10	11	29	36	-7	34	L W L L L
14 Genoa	29	9	7	13	37	51	-14	34	D L D D D
15 Siena	29	8	9	12	33	31	+2	33	D L W W W
16 Fiorentina	29	8	9	12	29	35	-6	33	D L L D W
17 Parma	29	7	11	11	35	46	-11	32	D L D D L
18 Lecce	29	6	9	14	31	45	-14	27	D D L D W
19 Novara	29	5	9	15	24	46	-22	24	D W W L L
20 Cesena	29	4	6	19	18	47	-29	18	D L L D L

GERMANY Bundesliga

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Borussia Dortmund	27	19	5	3	59	17	+42	62	W W D W W
2 Bayern München	27	18	3	6	66	18	+48	57	W W W L W
3 Schalke 04	27	17	2	8	60	34	+26	53	W W W L L
4 Borussia M'gla…	27	15	6	6	40	18	+22	51	L W D L D
5 Bayer Leverkusen	27	11	7	9	39	36	+3	40	L L L W W
6 Werder Bremen	27	11	7	9	41	40	+1	40	D L W L L
7 Stuttgart	27	11	6	10	44	34	+10	39	W W D W W
8 Hannover 96	27	9	11	7	35	38	-3	38	L W L D L
9 Wolfsburg	27	11	4	12	36	48	-12	37	W W W D L
10 Hoffenheim	27	8	9	10	31	38	-7	33	W L L D W
11 Nürnberg	27	9	4	14	25	38	-13	31	L L L W W
12 Mainz 05	27	7	9	11	39	44	-5	30	L L W L W
13 Freiburg	27	7	7	13	35	53	-18	28	W W D W L
14 Köln	27	8	4	15	34	56	-22	28	L L W D L
15 Augsburg	27	5	12	10	28	41	-13	27	D W D D W
16 Hamburger SV	27	6	9	12	31	50	-19	27	L L L L D
17 Hertha BSC	27	6	8	13	29	48	-19	26	W L L W L
18 Kaiserslautern	27	3	11	13	17	38	-21	20	L L D D L

HOLLAND Eredivisie

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 AZ	27	17	5	5	54	25	+29	56	W D W W D
2 Ajax	27	16	7	4	70	33	+37	55	W W W W W
3 Twente	27	15	7	5	69	32	+37	52	D W L L W
4 PSV	27	15	6	6	68	40	+28	51	L W L L W
5 Feyenoord	27	15	6	6	54	32	+22	51	W W D W L
6 Heerenveen	27	14	9	4	61	42	+19	51	W L W D D
7 Vitesse	27	12	5	10	35	32	+3	41	L W W W L
8 Roda JC	27	12	1	14	47	57	-10	37	W L W L L
9 Groningen	27	10	5	12	38	49	-11	35	W L L L L
10 NEC	27	10	4	13	31	36	-5	34	D W W D W
11 RKC Waalwijk	27	10	4	13	28	39	-11	34	L W L W W
12 Heracles	27	9	6	12	42	42	+0	33	W L L L L
13 Utrecht	27	7	9	11	40	45	-5	30	L W D D L
14 NAC Breda	27	8	6	13	34	40	-6	30	D D W L W
15 ADO Den Haag	27	7	8	12	30	51	-21	29	D L W D L
16 VVV	27	7	4	16	32	62	-30	25	L L L W W
17 Excelsior	27	4	6	17	21	59	-38	18	L W L L L
18 De Graafschap	27	4	4	19	22	60	-38	16	L L L L L

SCOTLAND SPL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Celtic	31	24	3	4	64	20	+44	75	L D W W W
2 Rangers	31	21	4	6	60	23	+37	57	W L L W L
3 Motherwell	31	16	6	9	41	35	+6	54	L W W L W
4 Dundee United	31	12	10	9	51	40	+11	46	W W W W W
5 St. Johnstone	30	13	7	10	41	34	+7	46	W W D W D
6 Heart of Midlo…	31	12	6	13	36	31	+5	42	L W W L L
7 Kilmarnock	31	8	13	10	34	44	-10	37	W D D L L
8 Aberdeen	31	7	12	12	29	34	-5	33	L L D D D
9 St. Mirren	31	6	14	11	27	41	-14	32	D L D D D
10 Inverness CT	30	8	7	15	34	50	-16	31	W D L L D
11 Hibernian	31	5	8	18	30	59	-29	23	L L D W L
12 Dunfermline At…	31	4	8	19	31	67	-36	20	D L L L D

THE CHAMPIONSHIP

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Southampton	39	23	9	7	72	35	+37	78	W W W W D
2 Reading	39	22	7	10	56	34	+22	73	W L W D W
3 West Ham United	39	20	12	7	61	38	+23	72	W D D D D
4 Brighton & Hov…	39	17	11	11	48	40	+8	62	D W L W D
5 Middlesbrough	39	16	14	9	46	43	+3	62	D D D L L
6 Birmingham City	38	16	12	10	60	41	+19	60	D L W L D
7 Blackpool	39	16	12	11	66	56	+10	60	L D W L L
8 Cardiff City	39	15	15	9	57	50	+7	60	D D D L W
9 Hull City	39	16	10	13	38	34	+4	58	L L L D W
10 Leeds United	39	16	9	14	59	57	+2	57	W L D W D
11 Leicester City	39	15	11	13	56	48	+8	56	D W D W L
12 Derby County	39	16	7	16	44	52	-8	55	W L W W L
13 Crystal Palace	39	13	15	11	40	36	+4	54	D L W D D
14 Watford	39	14	12	13	46	55	-9	54	W W D W D
15 Ipswich Town	39	15	7	17	62	68	-6	52	D L W W D
16 Burnley	38	14	8	16	50	47	+3	50	D L D D L
17 Barnsley	39	13	7	19	47	62	-15	46	W L L L L
18 Peterborough U…	39	12	8	19	59	64	-5	44	L L W L W
19 Millwall	39	10	10	19	44	54	-10	40	L W L L W
20 Nottingham Forest	39	11	7	21	41	59	-18	40	D D W L W
21 Bristol City	39	9	9	21	33	62	-29	36	D L D L W
22 Coventry City	39	8	11	20	35	52	-17	35	W D D D D
23 Portsmouth	39	11	10	18	40	43	-3	33	W L W D L
24 Doncaster Rovers	39	7	11	21	34	64	-30	32	D L L L D

LEAGUE ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Charlton Athletic	39	24	10	5	70	31	+39	82	L W D L L
2 Sheffield Wedn…	39	22	8	9	67	45	+22	74	W D W W W
3 Sheffield United	38	22	7	9	73	41	+32	73	W D D W L
4 Huddersfield Town	38	18	17	3	71	38	+33	71	W W D D W
5 Milton Keynes Dons	39	18	13	8	73	42	+31	67	L D W D W
6 Carlisle United	38	16	13	9	56	57	-1	61	W D D D W
7 Stevenage	38	14	16	8	53	36	+17	58	D D D D W
8 Notts County	39	16	9	14	58	54	+4	57	D L L W D
9 Brentford	38	14	11	13	51	45	+6	53	W W L L L
10 Colchester United	39	12	16	11	51	52	-1	52	L D D D D
11 Hartlepool United	39	13	11	15	43	46	-3	50	W L D D L
12 AFC Bournemouth	39	13	10	16	42	47	-5	49	D L W D L
13 Tranmere Rovers	39	12	12	15	41	42	-1	48	W W D W W
14 Oldham Athletic	38	13	9	16	45	55	-10	48	L W W L L
15 Preston North End	39	12	11	16	48	60	-12	47	L D D W L
16 Yeovil Town	39	12	10	17	50	64	-14	46	L L W D W
17 Leyton Orient	38	12	10	16	41	56	-15	46	W L L W L
18 Scunthorpe United	39	8	19	12	48	52	-4	43	D D D D D
19 Bury	39	11	10	18	49	70	-21	43	D D L L L
20 Walsall	39	8	18	13	41	45	-4	42	W D D L D
21 Wycombe Wanderers	39	11	7	21	57	72	-15	40	D W W D W
22 Rochdale	39	7	13	19	35	62	-27	34	L L W D L
23 Exeter City	39	8	10	21	33	62	-29	34	L L L L L
24 Chesterfield	38	7	12	19	40	62	-22	33	L D D D W

LEAGUE TWO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Swindon Town	37	24	4	9	63	27	+36	76	W L W W L
2 Torquay United	39	21	9	9	56	42	+14	72	W L W W D
3 Crawley Town	38	20	11	7	67	46	+21	71	W W W W D
4 Shrewsbury Town	38	21	8	9	54	34	+20	71	W W L W D
5 Southend United	39	20	7	12	64	46	+18	67	L L W D D
6 Oxford United	39	17	14	8	54	36	+18	65	W D W W L
7 Cheltenham Town	39	19	8	12	55	41	+14	65	D L L L L
8 Crewe Alexandra	39	18	7	14	56	52	+4	61	W W W W D
9 Gillingham	39	17	7	15	68	56	+12	58	L D L W L
10 Aldershot Town	38	17	5	16	41	42	-1	56	W W W D L
11 Rotherham United	39	14	11	14	56	54	+2	53	L W L L W
12 Morecambe	39	13	12	14	55	45	+10	51	L D W L W
13 Accrington Stanley	39	12	14	13	47	52	-5	50	L L D W D
14 Bristol Rovers	39	13	10	16	46	58	-12	49	L W D W D
15 AFC Wimbledon	39	13	8	18	54	66	-12	47	W L L W W
16 Port Vale	38	16	8	14	61	52	+9	46	L W L L W
17 Burton Albion	39	12	10	17	46	65	-19	46	W L L L L
18 Northampton Town	38	11	8	19	49	68	-19	41	D W L W W
19 Bradford City	39	9	13	17	47	53	-6	40	L D L L L
20 Barnet	38	10	9	19	44	67	-23	39	D D L W L
21 Dagenham & Red…	39	11	5	23	40	67	-27	38	W D W L L
22 Plymouth Argyle	39	8	13	18	40	57	-17	37	D D W L W
23 Macclesfield Town	39	8	12	19	36	51	-15	36	D L L D D
24 Hereford United	39	8	11	20	41	63	-22	35	L L L W D

Greece Super League

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Olympiakos Piraeus	26	20	4	2	63	16	+47	64	W W W W W
2 Panathinaikos	26	18	3	5	44	23	+21	54	W L L L W
3 Atromitos	26	13	8	5	30	22	+8	47	W D W W W
4 PAOK	26	13	7	6	39	21	+18	46	W D L W D
5 AEK Athens	26	13	6	7	32	25	+7	45	W D W L D
6 Aris	26	10	9	7	27	23	+4	39	W W L W D
7 Asteras Tripolis	26	11	5	10	23	30	-7	38	L D W W W
8 OFI	26	9	6	11	23	24	-1	33	L L L L D
9 Levadiakos	26	8	6	12	26	37	-11	30	W D D L L
10 Xanthi	26	8	5	13	25	30	-5	29	L L L L L
11 PAS Giannina	26	7	8	11	24	29	-5	29	D W D W W
12 Panionios	26	8	5	13	23	28	-5	29	L W W L L
13 Ergotelis	26	7	6	13	22	36	-14	27	D W L L L
14 Panaitolikos	26	6	7	13	18	30	-12	25	L D W W L
15 Kerkyra	26	6	6	14	23	40	-17	24	L L W W L
16 Doxa Dramas	26	4	3	19	9	37	-28	15	L L L L L

France Ligue 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Montpellier	29	18	6	5	53	27	+26	60	W L W D W
2 PSG	29	17	9	3	53	30	+23	60	D D W W D
3 Lille	29	14	11	4	53	31	+22	53	W W L D D
4 Toulouse	29	14	8	7	31	24	+7	50	W W D W W
5 Olympique Lyon	29	15	4	10	46	36	+10	49	W W W L D
6 Saint-Étienne	29	13	7	9	35	31	+4	46	L L W L D
7 Stade Rennes	29	12	8	9	37	33	+4	44	L L D W D
8 Bordeaux	29	10	11	8	35	32	+3	41	D D W L L
9 Olympique Mars…	29	10	10	9	36	30	+6	40	D L L L L
10 Evian TG	29	9	9	11	41	43	-2	36	L W L W W
11 Valenciennes	29	9	7	13	29	34	-5	34	W L L D W
12 Nancy	29	8	9	12	27	36	-9	33	W W D W L
13 Dijon	29	9	6	14	36	48	-12	33	W W L D L
14 Lorient	29	7	11	11	28	37	-9	32	D W D L L
15 Ajaccio	29	7	10	12	31	49	-18	31	D D W L W
16 Brest	29	5	15	9	23	27	-4	30	L L L D W
17 Caen	29	7	8	14	32	44	-12	29	L D L D L
18 Nice	29	6	10	13	27	34	-7	28	D L D W W
19 Sochaux	29	6	9	14	29	45	-16	27	L W W D L
20 Auxerre	29	4	12	13	33	44	-11	24	L L D D D

Portugal Premeira Liga

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts	Last5games Most recent first
1 Sporting Braga	24	18	4	2	53	20	+33	58	W W W W W
2 Porto	24	17	6	1	54	17	+37	57	D W D W W
3 Benfica	24	17	5	2	54	21	+33	56	D W W L D
4 Marítimo	24	13	6	5	36	27	+9	45	W D W L W
5 Sporting CP	24	13	5	6	37	19	+18	44	W L W L W
6 Vitória Guimarães	24	11	3	10	29	30	-1	36	W D L W L
7 Olhanense	24	6	11	7	30	32	-2	29	D D D W D
8 Nacional	24	8	5	11	31	41	-10	29	W L D L W
9 Gil Vicente	24	6	8	10	24	36	-12	26	L W L L D
10 Paços de Ferreira	24	7	4	13	28	43	-15	25	D W L W L
11Rio Ave	24	7	3	14	24	29	-5	24	L L W W L
12 Vitória Setúbal	24	6	6	12	21	41	-20	24	W D L W W
13 Académica	24	5	8	11	22	31	-9	23	L L D D D
14 Beira-Mar	24	5	5	14	18	30	-12	20	L L W L L
15 União de Leiria	24	5	3	16	21	44	-23	18	L W L L L
16 Feirense	24	3	8	13	17	38	-21	17	L L L D L

...Results...Results....Results.....Results....Results....Results...Results...Results...Results...Results...Results...

EPL
Chelsea 0 - 0 Tottenham Hotspur
Arsenal 3 - 0 Aston Villa
Bolton Wanderers 2 - 1 Blackburn Rovers
Liverpool 1 - 2 Wigan Athletic
Norwich City 2 - 1 Wolverhampton …
Sunderland 3 - 1 Queens Park Ra…
Swansea City 0 - 2 Everton
Stoke City 1 - 1 Manchester City
West Bromwich … 1 - 3 Newcastle United
Manchester United 1 - 0 Fulham

THE CHAMPIONSHIP
Burnley 2 - 2 West Ham United
Leicester City 2 - 1 Hull City
Southampton 2 - 0 Doncaster Rovers
Derby County 3 - 2 Crystal Palace
Reading 3 - 1 Blackpool
Barnsley 1 - 0 Peterborough U…
Coventry City 2 - 0 Portsmouth
Nottingham Forest 1 - 1 Brighton & Hov…
Watford 2 - 1 Ipswich Town
Millwall 0 - 1 Leeds United
Middlesbrough 1 - 1 Bristol City
Birmingham City 1 - 1 Cardiff City
Mid-Week
Portsmouth 2 - 0 Hull City
Peterborough U… 0 - 2 West Ham United
Ipswich Town 1 - 1 Middlesbrough
Leicester City 0 - 0 Nottingham Forest
Crystal Palace 1 - 1 Doncaster Rovers

LEAGUE ONE
Huddersfield Town 1 - 0 Charlton Athletic
Oldham Athletic 1 - 0 AFC Bournemouth
Wycombe Wanderers 1 - 1 Milton Keynes
Leyton Orient 0 - 1 Sheffield Wedn…
Scunthorpe United 0 - 0 Notts County
Preston North End 1 - 1 Bury
Brentford 2 - 0 Rochdale
Tranmere Rovers 2 - 0 Exeter City
Walsall 1 - 1 Stevenage
Yeovil Town 0 - 1 Hartlepool United
Colchester United 1 - 1 Carlisle United
Mid-week
Milton Keynes Dons 1 - 2 Carlisle United
Preston North End 1 - 3 Brentford
Oldham Athletic 0 - 1 Leyton Orient
Walsall 3 - 1 Colchester United
Stevenage 2 - 2 AFC Bournemouth

LEAGUE TWO
Northampton Town 0 - 0 Plymouth Argyle
Hereford United 0 - 1 Crewe Alexandra
AFC Wimbledon 4 - 0 Burton Albion
Dagenham & Red… 2 - 1 Accrington Stanley
Morecambe 0 - 1Shrewsbury Town
Bristol Rovers 1 - 0 Southend United
Bradford City 2 - 2 Gillingham
Cheltenham Town 0 - 0 Oxford United
Torquay United 2 - 1 Port Vale
Crawley Town 3 - 0 Rotherham United
Mid-Week
Bradford City 1 - 2 Crawley Town
Aldershot Town 1 - 0 Bristol Rovers
Shrewsbury Town SUSP Port Vale
Burton Albion 1 - 0 Gillingham
Accrington Stanley 0 - 2 Oxford United

FRANCE
Ajaccio 1 - 1 Lorient
Brest 0 - 1 Nancy
Evian TG 0 - 3 Lille
Olympique Lyon 2 - 1 Sochaux
Montpellier 1 - 0 Saint-Étienne
Nice 1 - 1 Olympique Mars…
Valenciennes 1 - 0 Stade Rennes
Dijon 2 - 0 Caen
Toulouse 1 - 0 Auxerre
PSG 1 - 1 Bordeaux

GERMANY
Bayern München 2 - 1 Hannover 96
Werder Bremen 1 - 1 Augsburg
Mainz 05 1 - 3 Hertha BSC
Freiburg 2 - 0 Kaiserslautern
Borussia M'gla… 1 - 2 Hoffenheim
Schalke 04 2 - 0 Bayer Leverkusen
Stuttgart 1 - 0 Nürnberg
Köln 1 - 6 Borussia Dortmund

GREECE
Aris 4 - 2 Panionios
Atromitos 1 - 0 Xanthi
OFI 0 - 1 Panathinaikos
Doxa Dramas 0 - 2 Levadiakos
AEK Athens 1 - 0 Panaitolikos
PAS Giannina 1 - 1 Ergotelis
Kerkyra 0 - 4 PAOK
Olympiakos Piraeus 7 - 2 Asteras Tripolis

HOLLAND
Roda JC 3 - 1 Vitesse
NAC Breda 1 - 1 NEC
Heerenveen 4 - 1 VVV
ADO Den Haag 1 - 1 Twente
AZ 1 - 0 RKC Waalwijk
Heracles 3 - 1 Utrecht
De Graafschap 0 - 3 Feyenoord
Ajax 2 - 0 PSV

ITALY
Milan 2 - 1 Roma
Palermo 1 - 1 Udinese
Atalanta 2 - 0 Bologna
Lazio 1 - 0 Cagliari
Napoli 2 - 2 Catania
Genoa 2 - 2 Fiorentina
Novara 0 - 0 Lecce
Cesena 2 - 2 Parma
Chievo 1 - 1 Siena
Juventus 2 - 0 Inter

PORTUGAL
Sporting CP 1 - 0 Feirense
Beira-Mar 0 - 3 Nacional
Vitória Setúbal 1 - 0 União de Leiria
Rio Ave 0 - 1 Vitória Guimarães
Paços de Ferreira 1 - 1 Porto
Marítimo 3 - 2 Gil Vicente
Sporting Braga 2 - 1 Académica

SCOTLAND
Aberdeen 0 - 1 Inverness CT
Dunfermline At… 1 - 1 St. Mirren
Hibernian 0 - 2 Dundee United
Kilmarnock 2 - 0 Motherwell
St. Johnstone 2 - 1 Heart of Midlo…
Rangers 3 - 2 Celtic

SPAIN
Mallorca 0 - 2 Barcelona
Real Madrid 5 - 1 Real Sociedad
Getafe 3 - 1 Valencia
Real Zaragoza 1 - 0 Atlético Madrid
Levante 0 - 2 Osasuna
Espanyol 1 - 2 Málaga
Athletic Club 1 - 1 Sporting Gijón
Rayo Vallecano 0 - 2 Villarreal
Real Betis 1 - 1 Racing Santander
Granada 0 - 3 Sevilla

One Game At A Time

France
Sat 31st Mar
Auxerre v Valenciennes
Bordeaux v Dijon
Lorient v Evian TG
Saint-Étienne v Nice
Sochaux v Brest
Nancy v PSG
Sun 1st Apr
Caen v Ajaccio
Lille v Toulouse
Stade Rennes v Olympique Lyon

Germany
Fri 30th Mar
Borussia Dortmund v Stuttgart
Sat 31st Mar
Bayer Leverkusen v Freiburg
Werder Bremen v Mainz 05
Nürnberg v Bayern München
Kaiserslautern v Hamburger SV
Augsburg v Köln
Hertha BSC v Wolfsburg
Hannover 96 v Borussia M'gla…
Sun 1st Apr
Hoffenheim v Schalke 04

Italy
Sat 31st Mar
Catania v Milan
Parma v Lazio
Sun 1st Apr
Roma v Novara
Cagliari v Atalanta
Lecce v Cesena
Fiorentina v Chievo
Internazionale v Genoa
Bologna v Palermo
Siena vUdinese
Mon 2nd Apr
Juventus v Napoli

England EPL
Sat 31st Mar
Aston Villa v Chelsea
Everton v West Bromwich …
Fulham v Norwich City
Manchester City v Sunderland
Queens Park Ra… v Arsenal
Wigan Athletic v Stoke City
Wolverhampton …v Bolton Wanderers
Newcastle United v Liverpool
Sun 1st Apr
Tottenham Hotspur v Swansea City
Mon 2nd Apr
Blackburn Rovers v Manchester United

The Championship
Sat 31st Mar
Bristol City v Derby County
Portsmouth v Burnley
Leeds United v Watford
West Ham United v Reading
Brighton & Hov… v Middlesbrough
Peterborough U… v Leicester City
Crystal Palace v Nottingham Forest
Ipswich Town v Barnsley
Hull City v Coventry City
Blackpool v Southampton

Scotland
Sat 31st Mar
Motherwell v Rangers
Dundee United v Dunfermline At…
Heart of Midlo… v Aberdeen
St. Mirren v Kilmarnock
Celtic v St. Johnstone
Sun 1st Apr
Inverness CT vHibernian

Greece
Sat 31st Mar
Xanthi v Doxa Dramas
Asteras Tripolis v OFI
Ergotelis v Atromitos
Kerkyra v AEK Athens
PAOK v PAS Giannina
Panathinaikos v Aris
Panaitolikos v Olympiakos Piraeus
Panionios vLevadiakos
Sun 1st Apr
Aris v Asteras Tripolis
Atromitos v PAOK

Spain
Sat 31st Mar
Racing Santander v Granada
Sporting Gijón v Real Zaragoza
Osasuna v Real Madrid
Barcelona v Athletic Club
Málaga v Real Betis
Atlético Madrid v Getafe
Sun 1st Apr
Valencia v Levante
Real Sociedad v Rayo Vallecano
Villarreal v Espanyol
Mon 2nd Apr
Sevilla v Mallorca

Holland
Fri 30th Mar
Utrecht V Excelsior
Sat 31st Mar
Groningen V Heerenveen
PSV V VVV
Twente V Roda JC
Feyenoord V NAC Breda
Sun 1st Apr
NEC v De Graafschap
RKC Waalwijk v ADO Den Haag
Ajax v Heracles
Vitesse v AZ

Portugal
Fri 30th Mar
Académica v Marítimo
Sat 31st Mar
Porto v Olhanense
Benfica v Sp Braga
Sun 1st Apr
Feirense v Beira-Mar
Nacional v Rio Ave
Gil Vicente v Vitória Setúbal
União de Leiria v Sporting CP
Vitória Guimarães v Paços de Ferreira

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See you again in October 2012 for A-League 2012/13.

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